EDITED BY

KHALED
EL-ROUAYHEB

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The Oxford Handbook *of* ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

KHALED EL-ROUAYHEB AND SABINE SCHMIDTKE

The study of Islamic philosophy has entered a new and exciting phase in the last few years. Both the received canon of Islamic philosophers and the narrative of the course of Islamic philosophy are in the process of being radically questioned and revised. The bulk of twentieth-century Western scholarship on Arabic or Islamic philosophy focused on the period from the ninth century to the twelfth. It is a measure of the transformation that is currently underway in the field that the present *Oxford Handbook* has striven to give roughly equal weight to every century from the ninth to the twentieth.

I.1. Rethinking the Course of Islamic Philosophy

Older assumptions about the study of Islamic philosophy were part of a grand narrative according to which the Islamic world preserved and interpreted the Greek philosophical heritage during the European "Dark Ages" and later handed over this heritage to the Latin West in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At this point, the role of the Islamic world in the narrative was over, and little scholarly attention was given to later Islamic philosophy. Some even speculated that, due to the disapproval of orthodox theologians, the philosophical tradition died out in the Islamic world in the twelfth century—so that, by a stroke of luck, the Latin West managed to take over the Greek philosophical heritage just in time, before the Islamic world itself repudiated this heritage and sank into fideist darkness. (Influential and older studies in this tradition include De Boer 1901; O'Leary 1922; Madkour 1934; Fākhūrī and Jurr 1957; Watt 1962.)

Three pioneering figures who questioned this narrative in the West starting from the 1960s were Henry Corbin, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Nicholas Rescher. Corbin and Nasr, influenced by a very different narrative of the history of Islamic philosophy that has survived in Iran, showed in a series of studies that the Islamic philosophical tradition continued without interruption in Shīʿī Iranian circles down to the modern period (see, for example, Corbin 1964; Nasr 1961, 1964). They emphasized in particular the rise of the anti-Peripatetic Platonist "Illuminationist" (*ishrāqī*) school of Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and the later synthesis of Illuminationist and mystical philosophy in seventeenth-century Iran. Rescher, for his part, drew attention to the continued vigor and sophistication of Arabic works on logic in the thirteenth century, a century after the supposed demise of the Islamic philosophical tradition (Rescher 1964, 1967).

The insights of Corbin, Nasr, and Rescher have since been incorporated into mainstream presentations of Islamic philosophy. The excellent *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, 2005), for example, emphasizes the period from the ninth to the twelfth centuries, but also includes chapters on Suhrawardī and later Shīʿī Iranian philosophy, and its chapter on logic acknowledges and develops the insights of Rescher concerning thirteenth-century Arabic logic. In recent years, however, the field has moved decisively beyond the points made by Corbin, Nasr, and Rescher in the 1960s, and it is high time for a new presentation that reflects this fact. It is now generally recognized that Corbin and Nasr unduly stressed the Platonist-mystical-Shīʿī synthesis of later centuries. Especially Hossein Ziai and John Walbridge have drawn attention to aspects of the Illuminationist philosophical tradition such as physics and logic that were of little interest to Corbin and Nasr (see especially Ziai 1990; Ziai and Alwishah 2003; Walbridge 2005; Ziai 2010; Walbridge 2012).

At the same time, it is beginning to emerge that there is a largely untold story of continued philosophical activity outside Illuminationist and Shīʿī-Iranian circles. Particularly the work of Dimitri Gutas, A. I. Sabra, Ayman Shihadeh, and Rob Wisnovsky has drawn attention to the fact that the supposed demise of philosophy in the (majority) Sunnī Islamic world is a myth (Gutas 2002; Sabra 1994; Shihadeh 2005; Wisnovsky 2004b, 2013). It may be that the word *falsafa* ("philosophy") was typically avoided due to association with specific ideas deemed heretical by mainstream religious scholars (for example, the eternity of the world, the denial of the possibility of miracles, the denial of God's knowledge of particulars in the sublunary world, and the denial of bodily resurrection). However, a great deal of "philosophy" in the modern sense of the word was still pursued under other names. Especially the field of Islamic theology (*kalām*) became thoroughly suffused in later centuries with terminology, issues, and modes of argumentation derived from Greek philosophy. Widely studied handbooks of theology after the twelfth century typically devoted considerable attention to thoroughly rational discussions of philosophical topics such as the nature of knowledge, the relation between essence and existence, the soul and its relation to the body, the ten Aristotelian categories, predication, modality, the nature of time and space, physics and cosmology (see, for example, the table of contents of one such theological handbook translated in Calverley and Pollock 2002, or the contribution by Alnoor Dhanani to the present volume, on another handbook from the fourteenth century). The study of logic also became incorporated into the curricula of Islamic colleges (madrasas) in later centuries, and the continued vitality of the later tradition of logic even beyond the thirteenth century has been brought out by recent research (for example El-Rouayheb 2010). The upshot is that sophisticated epistemological, metaphysical, natural-philosophical, and logical discussions in later centuries were often carried out by scholars who did not self-identify as *falāsifa* largely because they would have associated the term with acceptance of an Aristotelian and/or Neoplatonic cosmology.

Supplementing these recent insights have been a number of further developments in the field. In the past decades, there has been a steady stream of modern editions of philosophical works, largely thanks to the efforts of modern scholars in the Islamic world. According to the older vision of Corbin and Nasr, Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1045/1635) marked the culmination of the later Islamic philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, recent years has seen editions of works by important later philosophers active in Iran, some of whom were highly critical of Mullā Ṣadrā, such as Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī (d. 1080/1669), Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1098/1687), and Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī (d. 1243/1826) (see, for example, Hiravī and Bayraq 2007; Iṣfahānī 1999; Bū ʿAlī 2007). Furthermore, the older narrative of later Islamic philosophy tended to jump from Suhrawardī in the twelfth century to Mullā Ṣadrā in the seventeenth. Recent editions and studies have drawn attention to important figures in the intervening centuries, such as Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284), Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 711/1311), Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsāʾī (fl. 883/1479), and Najm al-Dīn Nayrīzī (fl. 928/1522). (See, for example, Walbridge 1992; Schmidtke 2000; Schmidtke and Pourjavady 2006; Ḥabībī 2009; Pourjavady 2011.) There has also been an awakening of interest in Ottoman philosophy in recent years in Turkey, with scholars beginning to edit works by important figures such as Ṭāşköprüzāde (d. 968/1561), Ebū Saʿīd Ḫādimī (d. 1176/1762), and Ismāʿīl Gelenbevī (d. 1205/1790) (see Gül 2009; Konevi and Konevi 2012; Öküdan 2007). Later Indo-Islamic philosophy is also beginning to receive some of the attention it deserves, especially in the work of Asad Q. Ahmed and Sajjad Rizvi (see, for example, Ahmed 2013a, 2013b; Rizvi, 2011).

Equally important, there has lately been a significant re-evaluation of the literary forms of commentary (*sharḥ*) and gloss (*ḥāshiyah*). For much of the twentieth century, the predominant assumption was that the commentaries and glosses of later centuries were pedantic and uncritical expositions that would not merit closer examination. However, this was largely an "armchair" assumption not grounded in a patient examination of these works. In recent years, the older view has been questioned, and more and more scholars are coming to recognize that commentaries and glosses were important vehicles for critical reflection in later centuries (see especially Wisnovsky 2004a; Ahmed 2013b). The fifteenth-century Persian scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502), for example, was arguably one of the most innovative and influential of later Islamic philosophers. Yet his major writings—widely studied for centuries in Iran, India, and the Ottoman Empire—took the form of commentaries and glosses on works by earlier figures (see Reza Pourjavady's contribution to this volume for further details).

I.2. A New Presentation of the Field

The present volume is different from earlier overviews in two conspicuous ways. First, as mentioned above, it strives to give roughly equal weight to every century from the ninth to the twentieth. Second, its entries are work centered rather than person or theme centered. In other words, contributors focus, after briefly introducing a philosopher's life and oeuvre, on one major work and give a relatively detailed exposé of it. Article-length entries on individual philosophers can be excellent, but they often have to sacrifice depth to breadth. Entries on movements would have to sacrifice depth to breadth to an even greater degree, and would risk becoming little more than a list of names and titles. Entries on themes are arguably not feasible given the present stage of research. Too few contemporary scholars have a solid command of both earlier and later Islamic philosophical literature, and thematic entries would risk being slanted toward the earlier centuries and more well-known figures at the expense of the later period and lesser-known figures. Particularly at a time when the canon of Islamic philosophy is being reconsidered and new figures and works are emerging from undeserved obscurity, a thematic approach would be counterproductive.

The work-centered format is also intended to allow room for the attention to detail and sustained exposition that are often sacrificed in article-length surveys of the entire range of contributions by an individual philosopher. This should hopefully give the reader a better sense of what a work in Islamic philosophy looks like and a better idea of the issues, concepts, and arguments that are at play in works belonging to various periods and subfields within Islamic philosophy.

The selection of entries has aimed to bring out the uninterrupted history of Islamic philosophy down to the modern period, and to emphasize the fact that philosophical activity in later centuries was not confined to one region of the Islamic world and was not exclusively preoccupied with a single set of issues. Works that were the product of the vibrant philosophical scene in Iran in the Safavid (1501–1722) and Qajar (1779–1925) periods have been supplemented by including less-known works from Egypt, Ottoman Turkey, and Mughal India, and later works with the expected focus on metaphysics and ontology have been supplemented with works on logic and natural philosophy. The twentieth-century works that are covered include an attempt by a traditionally trained Shīʿī scholar to solve Hume's problem of induction, and an influential Egyptian philosopher's adaptation of the ideas of the logical positivists. By covering such works, we hope to challenge a widespread assumption that later Islamic philosophy is necessarily an arcane (or peculiarly "spiritual") discipline that, for better or worse, bears little relation to the concerns of modern Western analytic philosophers.

Though one of the aims of the present work has been to broaden the geographic and temporal scope of the field of Islamic philosophy, some major figures and works that ideally should have been included have unfortunately had to be left out. Inevitably, some of the scholars who were asked to contribute to the volume were unable to do so, for reasons ranging from prior commitments to medical issues. Though we actively sought contributions from scholars who are based in the Islamic world, many of these scholars were not comfortable writing in English. Due to such factors, our volume has had to forgo including contributions on works by, for example, the important logician and philosophical theologian Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), the Ottoman scholars Ahmed Ṭāşköprüzāde and Ismāʿīl Gelenbevī, as well as Safavid and post-Safavid philosophers such as Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 948/1542), Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī, Mahdī Narāqī (d. 1209/1795), and Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī.

There is a long-standing dispute over whether to call the field of study "Arabic philosophy" or "Islamic philosophy." Neither term is entirely satisfactory. The term "Arabic philosophy" is often deemed offensive by non-Arab Muslims. To some extent, this might be because it is difficult to capture the distinction made in English between "Arabic" (a linguistic designation) and "Arab" (an ethnic designation) in some relevant languages. In Arabic and Persian, for example, both would be translated as *ʿarabī*, and the term "Arab philosophy" is clearly both inadequate and offensive. But even the linguistic term "Arabic" elides the fact that especially in later centuries philosophical works were written in Persian and Turkish (and even English, as in the case of Muhammad Iqbal). At the same time, the term "Islamic philosophy" does not do justice to the role of non-Muslims in this tradition, for example the Christians Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 260/873), Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (d. 363/974), and Abū l-Faraj Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 434/1043), or the Zoroastrian student of Avicenna Bahmanyār (d. 457/1065), or the Jewish philosophers Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 560/1165) and Ibn Kammūna. Furthermore, some contributors to the tradition, such as Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925), were born Muslims but came to reject fundamental precepts of the Islamic religion (such as prophecy). In light of these difficulties, some modern scholars prefer locutions such as "philosophy in the Islamic world" or even "Islamicate philosophy," but the first of these is unwieldy and the second unfamiliar. In the end, there are more important tasks than getting bogged down in issues of nomenclature. "Islamic philosophy" may not be ideal, but a choice had to be made, and it may be less unsatisfactory than the alternatives.

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CHAPTER 1

THE *THEOLOGY* ATTRIBUTED TO ARISTOTLE

Sources, Structure, Influence

CRISTINA D'ANCONA

1.1. The Pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*: Some Facts

The first explicit quotation from a work named *Theology* by the pen of "Aristotle" features in al-Fārābī's *Harmonization of the Two Opinions of the Two Sages, Plato the Divine and Aristotle* (Martini Bonadeo 2008, 74:5–16 in Arabic; Butterworth 2001, 164–65 in English),[1] and the *Theology* is listed among Aristotle's works in the *Kitāb al-Fihrist* by Ibn al-Nadīm (ed. Flügel 252.4 = ed. Tajaddud, 312.20). If we take into account the title of a collection allegedly translated by Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī (fl. 302/914)[2] of texts that

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[1] Critical edition by Martini Bonadeo (2008), English trans. by Butterworth (2001). The Farabian authorship of this text has been challenged (see the dossier in Martini Bonadeo 2008, 28–30). Endress (2008) and Martini Bonadeo (2008) hold the text to be authentic; Rashed (2009) and Gleede (2012) maintain that it is spurious. The question of the authorship of this work does not affect the issue of the mention of "Aristotle's" *Theology* in it. As far as we know, the *Harmonization* is the first work in which the *Theology* is ascribed to "Aristotle"; given that none of the scholars who challenge the Farabian authorship of this writing advances a candidate either earlier or much later than al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), this elicits the conclusion that toward the middle of the tenth century the *Theology* was known as a work by Aristotle. Besides the literal quotation from Aristotle's *Theology*, mention of the text occurs in various places: 64.7; 64.15–65.14; 69.15–70.7 Martini Bonadeo, English trans. by Butterworth (2001), 155–57, 161.

[2] The *floruit* of Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī is given by the year of his appointment as the director of the hospital founded by the vizier ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā (d. 334/946). One of the most prominent scholars of his age, Abū ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī was a pupil of Isḥāq b. Ḥunayn (d. 289/910), and the author of many translations of scientific and philosophical works: see the entry by G. Endress in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 8: 858. The alleged "extracts by Alexander" from the "*Theology* by Aristotle" are in fact some *Questions* by Alexander of Aphrodisias and some propositions of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, as shown by van Ess (1966) and

"Alexander extracted from Aristotle's *Theology*" (Rosenthal 1955; van Ess 1966; Endress 1973, 34), the conclusion imposes itself that in the fourth/tenth century the exposure of the cultivated Arab readership to Neoplatonism in Aristotle's garb was an accomplished fact. That the *Theology* quoted in the *Harmonization* is nothing if not the adapted Arabic version of Plotinus is made evident by a passage as literal as to feature in the discussion of the textual tradition of the pseudo-*Theology* itself (Zimmermann 1986, 140). That the *Theology* alluded to in the *Harmonization* did also contain other Neoplatonic texts, namely parts of the Arabic version of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, has been convincingly argued (Endress 1973, 246; Zimmermann 1986, 178–80). All this suggests that in the philosophical circles of that age various texts were available, gathered under the common reference to Aristotle as their author, but issued in reality from Neoplatonic literature: among them, the well-known *Book of the Exposition by Aristotle on the Pure Good* (*Liber de Causis*), which was known as a work by "Aristotle" by the end of the fourth/tenth century (Rowson 1984). The most important of these pseudepigrapha is the *Theology* par excellence: the adapted translation of selected writings from the *Enneads*. The *Theology of Aristotle* was the main conduit through which Plotinus's doctrines were known in the Arabic-speaking world, a fact that has been aptly described as the "power of anonymity" that Plotinus held on Arabic philosophical literature (Rosenthal 1974).

If the mid-fourth/tenth century openly credits Aristotle with a Neoplatonic *Theology*, this does not imply that the latter remained unknown to or scarcely influential on earlier writers. The contrary is true: the Arabic adapted version of Plotinus (henceforth ps.-*Theology*) is echoed in several works from the second half of the third/ninth century onward. But before we turn to the doctrines of the ps.-*Theology* and to their influence, it may be well to recall the main data about the text itself.

The ps.-*Theology* has come down to us in two versions: one in Arabic, transmitted by more than one hundred manuscripts,[3] and another one that is fully extant in Latin and is fragmentarily attested in Judeo-Arabic (Borisov [1942] 2002; Fenton 1986; Aouad 1989, 564–70; Treiger 2007). The Latin version is transmitted by the editio princeps

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Endress (1973, 33–40). Some by Alexander, and all the texts of Proclus in this collection, trace back to a stage of the translations into Arabic that is earlier than Dimashqī's, as has been proved by Endress (1973, 59, 75–76). The reason why al-Dimashqī is mentioned as the translator lies in that he probably translated part of Alexander's *Questions* present in this collection, gathering also earlier materials. This elicits the conclusion that these earlier materials included not only Plotinus, but also Proclus and some Alexander. For the present purposes, the relevant point is that the learned audience of Dimashqī's times knew of the *Theology* by "Aristotle" that was in fact based on post-Aristotelian materials, most of them Neoplatonic (see Zimmermann 1986, 185).

[3] The two editions of this version of the ps.-*Theology* (see below, note 5) are based on very few and random manuscripts. The study of the manuscript tradition of the ps.-*Theology* has been substantially improved, first in the 1950s, thanks to the research surrounding the critical edition of the *Enneads*, and then by G. Endress, who has established an unpublished list of more than forty manuscripts. The critical edition of the ps.-*Theology* is currently being prepared by a research team of the ERC AdG 249431 "Greek into Arabic: Philosophical Concepts and Linguistic Bridges." The list established by Prof. Endress counted as the starting point for the teamwork. Thanks to the support of the European Research Council, the team has raised the number of the known manuscripts of the ps.-*Theology* to more than one hundred.

published in Rome in 1519 (Mariën 1973, 608–10) and bears the title *Aristotle's Theology, this is to say the mystical philosophy according to the Egyptians*.[4] This text differs from the Arabic one on various counts. To mention only the blatant differences, it falls into fourteen chapters instead of the ten of the Arabic text, and the so-called Headings of the Questions (see below, section 1.2) do not feature in it; should one go deeper into the comparison, a mismatch would appear here and there, both in wording and in structure. Partly different from the Arabic, the Latin proves to be akin to the fragments in Judeo-Arabic, so paving the way to the conclusion (Borisov [1942] 2002) that the Latin translation was made on the basis of a full text, lost to us, of which only the Judeo-Arabic fragments survive, and which was somehow different from the Arabic text. Indeed, both in these fragments and in the Latin version some passages feature that are lacking in the Arabic text; hence, the work that lies in the background of the Latin has been labeled "Long Version." It has been convincingly argued (Pines 1954) that the "Long Version" included materials of Ismāʿīlī provenance added to the original (Stern 1960–61; Fenton 1986, 245–51), that is, to the text that we can read in Arabic and that is at times labeled "the *vulgata*"—a label that reflects more the poor quality of its editions to date[5] than the real nature of this work. The present chapter deals with the so-called *vulgata*, namely the Arabic ps.-*Theology*.

The title runs: "The first chapter of the book of Aristotle the Philosopher, called in Greek Theologia (*Uthūlūjiyā*), being the discourse on Divine Sovereignty: Porphyry the Syrian interpreted it, and it was translated into Arabic by ʿAbd al-Masīḥ b. Nāʿima of Emessa and was corrected for Aḥmad b. al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh by Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindī" (ed. Badawī 3.3–9; trans. Lewis 1959, 486, slightly modified). This title provides both a terminus ante quem for the translation of (parts of) the *Enneads* into Arabic, and valuable information about the milieu in which the ps.-*Theology* was created. The terminus ante quem for the translation, made by the Christian Ibn Nāʿima al-Ḥimsī,[6] is the reign of the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218/833–227/842), whose son Aḥmad had al-Kindī as his preceptor. We are told by the title that Aḥmad was the addressee of the adaptation of the work by "Aristotle" called in Greek *Uthūlūjiyā*. We are also told that the corrector was Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindī (d. *c.* 252/866), the "philosopher of the Arabs." This ties in with the view, suggested by several clues, of al-Kindī as engaged in the philosophical education of at least part of the ʿAbbāsid court (Rosenthal 1942; Endress 1997 and 2012; Adamson 2007). We owe to Gerhard Endress not only the discovery of the common style of a set of translations from Greek into Arabic originated within the "circle of al-Kindī" (Endress 1997), but also the key to understanding why he engaged so strenuously in the assimilation of Greek metaphysics. Endress has highlighted that al-Kindī's "programme *de propaganda philosophia*, which came into being as an ideology of scientists heirs to the Hellenistic encyclopaedia and as a religion for intellectuals compatible with Islam, was a programme for the integration of philosophy and the rational sciences into Muslim Arab society" (Endress 2000, 569; see also Endress 2007). Against this backdrop, it comes as no surprise that Plotinus's doctrines are construed as the exposition genuinely made by Aristotle himself of the pinnacle of the *Metaphysics*, a work whose translation into Arabic was commissioned by al-Kindī (*al-Fihrist*, ed. Flügel, 251.27–28 = ed. Tajaddud, 312.14). The *Metaphysics* is echoed at the very beginning of the ps.-*Theology* and counts as the main source of inspiration for al-Kindī's own work *On the First Philosophy* (Abū Rīda 1950; Rashed and Jolivet 1999; English trans. Ivry 1974).

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[4] The full title runs *Sapientissimi philosophi Aristotelis Stagiritae Theologia sive mystica philosophia secundum Aegyptios noviter reperta et in latinum castigatissime redacta*. The allusion to the Egyptians points to a passage in which Plotinus mentions the wise men of Egypt (V 8[31], 6.1 = ps.-*Theology*, ed. Badawī 1955, 10, 159.16). In the fiction of the *Theology*, this turns to be an utterance by Aristotle himself. As we are told in the preface to the Latin version, this helps to explain why the doctrines of the *Theology* are so different from Aristotle's own ideas: "As a matter of fact, Aristotle says here—something he does nowhere else—that he is accounting not for his own lore, but for other's, the Egyptians" (*etenim Aristotelis hic aperte praefatur, quod nusquam alibi, se non propriam, sed alienam Aegyptiorum sapientiam colligere*: Proemium, A [4v26–29]).

[5] *Editio princeps*: Dieterici (1882); *editio manualis*: Badawī (1955, repr. 1966). The poor quality of the *editio princeps* is occasionally remarked by Rosenthal (1952–55, 466); on the poor quality of the *editio manualis* see Lewis 1957.

[6] This name is repeated also at the beginning of the so-called Headings of the Questions (see below), where it is spelled ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Ḥimṣī al-Nāʿimī (8.4 Badawī). The full name as it is given in the *K. al-Fihrist* is ʿAbd al-Masīḥ ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥimṣī al-Nāʿimī (ed. Flügel, 244.5 = ed. Tajaddud, 304.26), but he is referred to as Ibn Nāʿima in the two entries where he is mentioned, namely that on the *Soph. El.* and that on the *Physics*. He is said (ed. Flügel, 249.27–28 = ed. Tajaddud, 309.9–10) to have translated into

The ps.-*Theology* opens with the claim that whoever wants to reach the knowledge of the ultimate end (*al-ghāya*) must seek for absolute certainty and conform in his behavior to the ideal of the ascent in the scientific disciplines toward contemplative life (ed. Badawī, 3.10–4.2). Then the writer gives the floor to the Sage, whose words are announced by the formula "the Sage said" (*qāla l-ḥakīm*, ed. Badawī, 4.3). The discourse of the Sage points to the final cause as the goal that, although coming last, sets the tone for all that has been done before: this theory of an Aristotelian flavor is expressed by the saying "first desired last attained" (Stern 1962; see also Zimmermann 1986, 111). The goal is described as the knowledge of the ultimate truth in theoretical sciences, and the path toward it is presented as a collective achievement of the leading philosophers (*afāḍil al-falāsifa*, ed. Badawī, 4.10). They all agree on the fact that the first causes of the universe are four: matter, form, the efficient cause, and perfection (ed. Badawī, 4.11). The Sage continues his account by saying that he has devoted to this topic a book named *baʿd al-ṭabīʿiyyāt*, "what is after the physical realities" (ed. Badawī, 4.11–5.2), a claim that leaves no room to doubt that the Sage speaking is "Aristotle." An overview of the *Metaphysics* follows, whose pivot is the topic of wisdom as the knowledge of causes, clearly reminiscent of the first book of the *Metaphysics*. Also the allusion to the philosophers of the past as engaged in the etiological inquiry traces back to the beginning of the

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Syriac the *Soph. El.* He also translated part of Aristotle's *Physics* with the commentary by Philoponus (ed. Flügel, 250.18 = ed. Tajaddud, 311.1). Ibn Nāʿima is mentioned also in the Latin version, not in the title (where only Aristotle appears: see above) but in the preface by Pietro Castellani, the "editor" of the Latin version (*Theologia Aristotelis a graeca lingua pridem per Abenamam saracenum in arabam translatum*, Proemium, A [4r8–10]).

Metaphysics. This account ends with another mention of this work, now called "Book of the Metaphysics," *Kitāb Maṭāṭāfūsīqā*" (ed. Badawī, 5.12). According to the Sage, the book of the *Metaphysics* contains the premises (*muqaddimāt*, ed. Badawī, 5.10) of the discourse on the Divine Sovereignty that is about to begin (ed. Badawī, 6.7), a label echoed in the title mentioned above: "Theologia (*Uthūlūjiyā*), being the discourse on Divine Sovereignty (*qawl ʿalā l-rubūbiyya*)."

As we have seen before, the contents of this "discourse on Divine Sovereignty" are extracted from a selection of the *Enneads*, that is, the systematic edition of Plotinus's writings provided by Porphyry. In his *Life of Plotinus and Order of His Books* published together with the *Enneads*, Porphyry says he had been inspired in his arrangement by Andronicus's thematic ordering of the *corpus Aristotelicum* (Porph. *Vita Plotini*, 24.5–11). The first three groups of nine treatises ("enneads") were devoted to man and the cosmos; the fourth ennead to soul; the fifth to the intelligible world; the sixth and last to the One, the first principle of Plotinus's universe. Of all this, only a part is attested in Arabic. The treatises translated come all from *Enneads* IV–VI, a fact that tips the scale in favor of a deliberate selection of topics, ruling out the hypothesis of a defective Greek model of the Arabic version. Even though there is no attestation of the treatises of *Enneads* I–III in Arabic, the manuscript of the *Enneads* out of which the translation was made must have been complete of the beginning; otherwise it would have been impossible to connect with the *Enneads* the name of Porphyry, which features in the title of the ps.-*Theology*. In fact, Porphyry's *Vita Plotini* does not have an independent circulation, but is premised to the *Enneads*; since in the ps.-*Theology* Porphyry is mentioned, it is fair to assume that the Greek manuscript, which was at the disposal of the translator, contained also the *Vita Plotini* and, by extension, the *Enneads* from their beginning. Be this as it may, what was considered worthy of being translated was the part dealing with the suprasensible principles: *Enneads* IV, V, and VI.

Plotinus's One, Intellect, and Soul feature in the following statement by "Aristotle" as the natural complement of the doctrines expounded in the *Metaphysics*:

> Now since we have completed the customary prefaces, which are principles that lead on to the explanation of what we wish to explain in this book of ours, let us not waste words over this branch of knowledge, since we have already given an account of it in the book of the Metaphysics . . . . Now our aim in this book is the discourse on the Divine Sovereignty, and the explanation of it, and how it is the first cause, eternity and time being beneath it, and that it is the cause and the originator of causes, in a certain way, and how the luminous force steals from it over Mind and, through the medium of Mind, over the universal celestial Soul, and from Mind, through the medium of Soul, over nature, and from Soul, through the medium of nature, over the things that come to be and pass away. This action arises from it without motion: the motion of all things comes from it and is caused by it, and things move towards it by a kind of longing and desire. (ps.-*Theol. Arist.*, ed. Badawī, 5.10–6.12; trans. Lewis 1959, 487)

It is apparent from this statement that Plotinus's One and Aristotle's Unmoved Mover merge together, and that the Plotinian principles Intellect and Soul are endowed with the task to let the power of the First Cause expand until it reaches the world of coming-to-be and passing away. Two accounts of the way in which the First Cause acts are combined: the Plotinian emanation from the One and the Aristotelian capability of the Unmoved Mover to impart movement as the object of desire (ὡς ἐρώμενον, *Metaph.* Λ.7, 1072b3). It comes as no surprise that the Aristotelian authorship of the ps.-*Theology* remained unchallenged for centuries, leading the most percipient readers of the past (who noticed that the *Theology* gives, despite everything, a distinct non-Aristotelian ring) to speculate about the causes of this discrepancy. One of the most ingenious attempts at accounting for the discrepancy has been made by Francesco Patrizi da Cherso in his 1591 work *Nova de universis philosophia*, to which the Latin version of the ps.-*Theology* is appended. According to Patrizi, Aristotle in his old age went back to the doctrines he had heard in his youth from Plato's own mouth: the "unwritten doctrines" whose similarity with Neoplatonic metaphysics has been remarked time and again, and to which Patrizi refers. That the doctrines held in the *Theology* were of "Platonic" coin was remarked in early modern times by Johannes Fabricius in the *Bibliotheca Graeca* (Fabricius 1716, 162),[7] and the name of Plotinus was connected with the ps.-*Theology* first in Thomas Taylor's harsh account of this text as a forgery (Taylor 1812, III, 402), then in Salomon Munk's *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Munk 1859, 248), and again in the review by Valentin Rose of the German translation of the ps.-*Theology* (Rose 1883) that inaugurated modern research on the Arabic Plotinus.

Yet close as the ps.-*Theology* is to Plotinus, there are also many differences between the Arabic version and the original text. First and foremost, the flow of the Greek has been substantially altered, and blocks of Plotinus's treatises are relocated, in what seems to be complete disorder. Second, misunderstandings, adaptations, and changes of meaning surface everywhere, and long passages feature in the ps.-*Theology*, that have no counterpart in the *Enneads*. Both the differences and the interpolations have been accounted for in past scholarship by advancing the hypothesis that the Arabic text was the translation not of the Greek *Enneads* but of another work, in which Plotinus's wording and thought had already undergone adaptations of various kinds. Among them are omnipresent the monotheistic adaptations that transform the One into God the Almighty and its causality into creation out of nothing. Given that some words of Syriac origin[8] or allegedly pointing to a Syriac antecedent peer out, the monotheistic adaptations were explained by the hypothesis that an adapted text based on Plotinus had been produced within a Christian milieu in Syria, and that it was such a text, lost to us, that lay in the background of the Arabic version (Baumstark 1902). However, the fact that the ps.-*Theology* is based on the Greek *Enneads* exactly as Porphyry had edited them has been proved beyond any doubt (Schwyzer 1941). In addition, there is no hard evidence pointing to a literary item in Syriac that may support the existence of an intermediary text, a fact that led Sebastian Brock to label "a Chimera" the alleged Syriac model of the ps.-*Theology* (Brock 2007).

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[7] The quote reads: "This work deals with God, *Logos*, soul, the cosmos, and the principles of things, not in Aristotelian vein, but more or less in the way of the Hermetic *Poemandres*, so that the very nature of this work makes it clear that its author is a Platonist, rather than Aristotle" (*In hoc opere de Deo,* λόγῳ, *anima, universo rerumque principiis non aristotelico more, sed ita fere ut in hermetico Poemandro sic disseritur, ut platonicum potius aliquem quam Aristotelem auctorem esse res ipsa clamet*).

[8] As is the case with *mīmar* for "chapter," a fact that from Baumstark (1902) onward has been adduced as evidence of the Syriac origin of the text. In the hypothesis of forgery, this is open to another explanation, which ties in with the fact that in the title Porphyry is mentioned as the *Syrian* commentator of the work at hand (*fassarahu Furfūriyyūs al-Ṣūrī*, ed. Badawī, 3.6, modified). Porphyry, the writer who gives the floor to "Aristotle" (cf. *qāla l-ḥakīm*, ed. Badawī, 4.3), is presented in this hypothesis as the author of the organization of the materials into chapters (*mayāmir*). For another intervention that in this hypothesis should be ascribed to Porphyry in his capacity of the commentator of Aristotle's *Theology*, see below, section 1.2.

If the ps.-*Theology* has the Greek *Enneads* as its immediate antecedent, how to explain the differences between the two works? Scholars answer this question by taking into account two other texts, distinct from the ps.-*Theology* but connected to it both because they share in the same adaptations and because one of them overlaps here and there with the ps.-*Theology*. They are the so-called *Sayings of the Greek Sage* (Rosenthal 1952–55, Wakelnig 2014), which at times overlap with the ps.-*Theology* but also contain passages from the Arabic Plotinus lacking in it, and an *Epistle on the Divine Science* falsely attributed to al-Fārābī (Kraus 1940–41), which does not overlap with the ps.-*Theology*, but has one passage in common with the *Sayings*. These two texts prove the existence of an "Arabic Plotinus Source" (Rosenthal 1952–55) wider than the ps.-*Theology* itself. To the same "Arabic Plotinus Source" trace back also other quotations of Plotinus's passages that share in the same adaptations: they have been recently discovered in the early Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Parva naturalia* produced within the "circle of al-Kindī" (Hansberger 2011). All this points to the existence of an adapted Arabic translation of *Enneads* IV–VI, whose terminus ante quem is the ps.-*Theology* created, if we trust its title, in the 220s/840s at the caliphal court of Baghdad.

The creation of the ps.-*Theology* as a work designed by "Aristotle" to fulfill the demand for an exposition of "Divine Sovereignty" has been accounted for in different ways: either as an awkward, later reconstruction of a collection of post-Aristotelian works that had originally been gathered within the "circle of al-Kindī" and was accidentally dismembered (Zimmermann 1986), or as the first attempt, made by al-Kindī himself, to put together a theological pinnacle for the Aristotelian corpus—an attempt not very successful in itself, but paving the way to a most refined outcome, the *Liber de Causis* (D'Ancona 2011). Both explanations are intended to account, although in different ways, for the fact that the chapters of the ps.-*Theology* do not follow the program described at the beginning of this work. This program is presented by "Aristotle" as an outline of what will be dealt with in the *Theology* (ed. Badawī, 6.3–4). He announces that, after having outlined what divine sovereignty is, he will proceed to describe the intelligible world, then the cosmic Soul, then again sublunar nature, and that he will eventually account for the destiny of the individual souls, explaining the cause of their descent in and ascent from the world of coming-to-be and passing away (ed. Badawī, 6.13–7.10). However, the ps.-*Theology* begins not by giving an account of the First Cause, but by raising the problem of the descent of the soul into the body; the other points mentioned by "Aristotle" are extensively dealt with in it, but a clear order cannot be detected in the flow of the chapters.

1.2. A NEOPLATONIC MODEL FOR GOD'S CAUSALITY AND THE SOUL'S "PROVENANCE AND DESTINATION": THE MAIN TOPICS OF THE PSEUDO-*THEOLOGY OF ARISTOTLE* AND THEIR IMPACT ON ARABIC-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

As we have just seen, the main topics that "Aristotle" sets for himself to discuss are divine causality, the hierarchy of the suprasensible principles, and the destiny of the soul. Before dealing extensively with these points, "Aristotle" announces he will list the "Headings of the Questions"—a puzzling item into which we are not compelled to enter here: suffice it to mention that they are 142 short numbered sentences closely connected with chapters 1–34 of *Enn*. IV 4[28], in itself a part of Plotinus's text that is present in the ps.-*Theology* (D'Ancona 2012). After this list, another section of the long first chapter comes:

> To proceed: Now that it has been demonstrated and confirmed that the soul is not a body and does not die or decay or perish, but is abiding and everlasting, we wish to study concerning her also *how she departs from the world of mind and* descends in this corporeal world of sense and *enters this* gross transient *body* which falls under genesis and corruption. (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, I, ed. Badawī, 18.11–16; trans. Lewis 1959, 219)

Conforming to Lewis's practice, the italics mark the words and sentences taken from Plotinus, and normal typescript indicates those that feature only in the Arabic text. Here, Plotinus's sentence "How then, since the intelligible is separate, does soul come into body?" (IV 7[2], 13.1–2, trans. Armstrong 1984) is encapsulated between two passages that do not come from the *Enneads*, namely a summary of a demonstration allegedly provided elsewhere of the incorporeal and immortal nature of the soul, and the amplification of the term "body" through the Aristotelian pair of generation-corruption, a move that lays emphasis on the corruptible nature of the body in which the soul is dwelling. Although incorporeal and immortal in itself, the soul is united with a body that comes to be and passes away. This raises a problem: if the soul existed prior to the body and its nature is higher than the body's, why on earth should it undergo, or even decide, the embodiment? This problem sets the scene for the rest of the chapter. "Aristotle" had alluded to this question just before announcing his wish to begin by a list of "Headings of the Questions": he had in fact claimed he would have dealt with "the state of the reasoning souls in their descent and their ascent and the discovery of the cause in that" (ed. Badawī, 7.7–8; trans. Lewis 1959, 487).

This problem is obviously a Platonic one: meaningless in the Aristotelian account of the soul, it arises for a Platonist who, sticking to the doctrine of the soul's incorporeality and immortality, has to face the rival notions of soul as the entelechy of the body and as one of its emergent properties. Plotinus was indeed such a Platonist, and in the treatise that is the source of the passage quoted above, namely IV 7[2], *On the Immortality of the Soul*, he spent much effort in arguing against Stoic emergentism and Aristotelian immanentism. After having criticized the rival theories, he presented the real nature of the soul: a substance on its own, independent of and superior to body. Then, in a sort of appendix to the main topic of the treatise, he raised the question that, in the ps.-*Theology*, turns to be the first step of the detailed treatment promised by "Aristotle": if soul is an incorporeal and immortal substance, why on earth does it come into a body? This question, raised in the final part of treatise IV 7[2], *On the Immortality of the Soul*, was so important in Plotinus's eyes that he went back to it in a treatise written shortly after, IV 8[6], *On the Descent of the Soul into the Bodies*. The numbers in square brackets are those of the chronological order in which Plotinus's treatises were written; the other numbers indicate the position assigned to them by Porphyry in the systematic layout—the *Enneads*. The sequence IV 7–IV 8 shows that Porphyry did not fail to notice how close are the conclusion of *On the Immortality of the Soul* and the main topic of *On the Descent of the Soul into the Bodies*: hence, he edited them as the seventh and eighth treatises of the fourth ennead, devoted to the soul. This link did not escape the creator of the ps.-*Theology* either: the first chapter, after "Aristotle's" introduction and the "Headings of the Questions," consists of the final part of the *Immortality of the Soul* and the beginning of the *Descent of the Soul into the Bodies*, linked together in a new literary item whose focus is the cause of the soul's departure from the intelligible world (table 1.1).

Not only does this add further evidence to the dependence of the ps.-*Theology* upon Porphyry's edition: it also indicates that the chapters of the "book by Aristotle the philosopher called in Greek Theology," as imperfect as their flow may be, result from an attempt at creating a new arrangement of the materials taken from Plotinus, a fact that rules out the hypothesis of an inept gathering of leaves accidentally scattered.

In the Greek original, the *Descent of the Soul into the Bodies* begins by a first-person account: "Often I have woken up out of the body to myself and have entered into myself, going out from all other things; I have seen a beauty wonderfully great and felt assurance that then most of all I belonged to the better part; I have actually lived the best life and come to identity with the divine; and set firm in it I have come to that supreme actuality, setting myself above all else in the realm of Intellect" (IV 8[6], 1.1–8, trans. Armstrong 1984). In chapter 1 of the ps.-*Theology*, the connection between the end of the part taken from the *Immortality of the Soul* and the beginning of the first-person account taken from the *Descent of the Soul into the Bodies* is marked by another intervention of the writer who, earlier in the chapter, had given the floor to "Aristotle" by the formula *qāla l-ḥakīm*. This time, the writer accounts for the use of the first person, saying: "A statement of his (*kalām lahu*) that is like an allegory (*ramz*) of the universal soul" (ed. Badawī, 22.1; trans. Lewis 1959, 225). There is no scholarly consensus about the identity of the "Allegorist,"[9] but his *kalām* has been unanimously acknowledged as

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[9] The "Allegorist" is referred to also in another passage of the ps.-*Theology*, whose wording points unmistakably to the sentence quoted above. Here is the passage: "*We say that he who is capable of* doffing

Table 1.1 The Greek and Arabic Plotinus

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6"><i>Ennead</i> IV (On Soul)</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Treatise 7
<i>On the Immortality of the Soul</i></th><th colspan="3">Treatise 8
<i>On the Descent of the Soul into the Bodies</i></th></tr>
<tr><td>1–8
The rival theories</td><td>9–12
The true doctrine of soul: a separate, immortal substance</td><td>13–15
Appendix: the problem of the descent of the soul into the bodies</td><td>1–2
The descent of the soul into the bodies: Plato's account</td><td>3–5
The body-soul relationship</td><td>6–8
Solution of the problem of the descent: the hierarchy of the levels of being. Appendix: the undescended soul</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Ps.-<i>Theology of Aristotle</i>, Chapter 1</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Aristotle's introduction to his "Theology," ed. Badawī, 3.1–7.10</td><td>Headings of the Questions, ed. Badawī, 8.1–18.10</td><td colspan="2">The reasons of the descent of the soul into the bodies, ed. Badawī, 18.13–21.17 (= IV 7, 13–15 + IV 8, 1–2)</td><td>Aristotle's exegesis of Plato's theological doctrine, ed. Badawī, 22.1–28.3</td></tr>
</table>

something important for the entire story of Arabic philosophy, and beyond. This passage has been often quoted or alluded to, in Arabic and Jewish philosophy and mysticism: by al-Kindī (*Discourse on the Soul Abridged from the Book of Aristotle, Plato and the Other Philosophers*, ed. Abū Rīda, 277.15–278.2 and 279.10–13), by al-Fārābī (see note 1), in the Epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (ed. Ghālib 1984, I, 138), by Ibn Zurʿa (quoted by al-Bayhaqī, 77.22–78.11, al-ʿAjam 1994), by Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (De Smet 2012, 136), and by Ibn Ṭufayl (ed. Gauthier 1981, 120.6–121.3). Other quotations or allusions feature in the works of Moses ibn Ezra, Shemtob ibn Falaqēra, Solomon ibn Gabirol, in the Sufi tradition, and in Jewish mysticism (Altmann 1963).

> *Often I have been* alone *with my soul and have doffed my body and laid it aside* and become as if I were naked substance without body, *so as to be inside myself, outside*

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his body and putting to rest its senses and promptings and motions, as the Allegorist (*ṣāḥib al-rumūz*) has described of his own soul, and is capable too in his thought of returning to himself and *raising his mind to the world of mind*, so as to see its beauty and splendour, *is able to recognize the glory, light and splendour of the mind*" (ed. Badawī, 56.4–7; trans. Lewis 1959, 375; the Plotinian passage echoed here is V 8[31], 1.1–2). According to Zimmermann (1986, 145–47), the expression *kalām lahu* (ed. Badawī, 22.1) alludes to Plato; according to D'Ancona et al. (2003, 280–82), to Aristotle. The topic of the allegory, *ramz*, is echoed also in the *Nabatean Agriculture*, a third–fourth-/ninth–tenth-century compilation of late-antique sources that includes also materials coming from the Arabic Plotinus: see Hämeen-Anttila 2006, 30 and 104–8. On the Plotinian passages in the *Nabatean Agriculture* see also Salinger 1971 and Mattila 2007.

> *all other things* and to be knowledge, knower, and known at once.[10] *Then do I see* within myself *such beauty and splendour as I do remain marvelling at and astonished, so that I know that I am one of the parts of the sublime, surpassing, lofty, divine world, and possess active life*. When I am certain of that, *I lift my intellect from that world into the divine cause and become as if I were placed in it and cleaving to it, so as to be above the entire intelligible world, and seem to be standing in that sublime and divine place*. And there I see such light and splendour as tongues cannot describe nor ears comprehend. (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, ed. Badawī, I, 22.2–9; trans. Lewis 1959, 225, slightly modified)

Following in the footsteps of Plotinus's narrative, the "Allegorist" experiences not only the return of his soul to itself, but also the spiritual union with the intelligible realm,[11] thus paving the way for the creation of one of the most pervasive topics of Arabic philosophy as a whole: that of the conjunction of man's mind with the separate Intellect. The fully fledged version of the theory of the conjunction of man's mind with the separate Intellect will be elaborated only after the translation by Isḥāq b. Ḥunayn of Alexander of Aphrodisias's short writing *On Intellect*, but the latter will be interpreted, both in the Arabic translation and by the philosophers who rely on it, in the light of the ps.-*Theology* (Geoffroy 2002). The influence of the ps.-*Theology* has been detected also on Avicenna's interpretation of the same topic (D'Ancona 2008).

After having experienced this conjunction, the "Allegorist" descends once again in the realm of discursive reasoning. As Plotinus did, he wonders how is it possible that his soul, in spite of the conjunction it had with the divine, descends into a corruptible body and becomes a part of the lower world ruled by coming-to-be and passing away (ed. Badawī, 22.9–15). The answer, as was the case with Plotinus, is provided by the Greek philosophers. The ancient thinkers quoted by Plotinus (Heraclitus, Empedocles, Pythagoras: IV 8[6], 1.11–23) count also for the "Allegorist" as the authoritative voices from the past—a case in point for the "agreement of the leading philosophers" emphasized by "Aristotle" at the beginning. Still following in Plotinus's footsteps (IV 8[6], 1.23–27), he turns now to Plato, whose thoroughness on this point he affirms to be unprecedented. Better than anyone else, Plato has explained why the soul enters this world (a sentence that comes from Plotinus) and how soul will "return to her own world, the true, the first world" (ed. Badawī, 23.15–16; trans. Lewis 1959, 229)—a sentence that does not come from Plotinus, but is added in the Arabic.

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[10] The words "and to be knowledge, knower, and known at once" do not feature in Lewis's translation because they are lacking in one of the manuscripts of the ps.-*Theology* that is particularly authoritative. The issue cannot be discussed here, but let me mention the fact that these words feature in Fārābī's quotation (see Martini Bonadeo 2008, 74.8). This independent witness, much earlier than the earliest manuscript of the ps.-*Theology* known to us, tips the scale in favor of the branch of the textual tradition that has this sentence.

[11] Plotinus described the individual soul as capable of performing the same cognitive activity as the separate Intellect, and this is different from saying, in the footsteps of St. Paul (1 Cor. 2:9), that one has experienced the direct vision of God. On the Pauline inspiration of the words "And there I see such light and splendour as tongues cannot describe nor ears comprehend," which became also a Prophetic hadith, see Zimmermann 1986, 141–43; see also Bucur and Bucur 2006. Lack of space forbids the treatment of this topic, but let me briefly recall that for Plotinus the discursive individual soul, once it performs at its utmost the intellectual activity, is also in a position to contemplate the One, as the separate Intellect does. This is admittedly different from the beatific vision mentioned in the Arabic adaptation, but is not a complete misunderstanding of Plotinus's point.

If anyone levels the objection that Plato's statements are inconsistent, because in some of his writings he condemns the soul's union with body while in others this union counts as the fulfillment of God's decree, the "Allegorist" declares that Plato's behavior is meant to incite the reader into going beyond the face value of these statements. All this comes from Plotinus (IV 8[6], 1.28–29), and so it is also for the assessment of the crucial role of the *Timaeus*. For Plotinus, in this dialogue one can find not only Plato's doctrine about body and soul, but also Plato's answer to the cosmological question as a whole, namely whether or not the divine Intellect acted well in producing the world of becoming (IV 8[6], 2.1–8). At this point, the Arabic text parts company with the treatise *On the Descent of the Soul into the Bodies*, and a long section begins that has no counterpart in the Greek text. The "Allegorist" wears the cloak of the exegete of Plato's theological doctrine.

> We intend to begin by giving the view of this surpassing and sublime man on these things we have mentioned. We say that when the sublime Plato saw that the mass of philosophers were at fault in their description of the essences, for when they wished to know about the true essences they sought them in this sensible world, because they rejected intelligible things and turned to the sensible world alone, wishing to attain by sense-perception all things, both the transitory and the eternally abiding . . . he pitied them . . . and guided them to the road that would bring them to the truth of things. He distinguished between mind and sense-perception and between the nature of the essences and the sensible things. He established that the true essences were everlasting, not changing their state, and that the sensible things were transitory, falling under genesis and corruption. When he had completed this distinction he began by saying "the cause of the true essences, which are bodiless, and of the sensible things, which have bodies, is one and the same, and that is the first true essence," meaning by that the Creator, the Maker. (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, I, ed. Badawī, 25.15–26.8; trans. Lewis 1959, 231)

This passage, with its deliberate echo of the Aristotelian history of philosophy as a progress from the materialistic beginnings toward a fully fledged doctrine of the true causes (*Metaph.* A.3, 983b6–11), with its distinction between the mass of the philosophers liable to error and the leading ones who guide others toward truth, and with the final move of crediting Plato with the doctrine of creation, is of great importance for the development of Arabic-Islamic philosophy. Even more important is the fact that the exegete, "Aristotle," openly endorses the master's ideas, namely "Plato's" ones, presenting creation as a doctrine shared by both: note that the elucidation that the "first true essence" (*al-anniyya al-ūlā al-ḥaqq*) is "the Creator, the Maker" (*al-bāriʾ al-khāliq*) is provided by "Aristotle" himself. It is still "Aristotle" who extols "Plato" for having taught the same doctrine that he himself had announced at the beginning of his *Theology*, namely the existence of Intellect and Soul as the principles that convey the creative power of the First Cause:

> Then he said: "This world is compounded of matter and form. What informed matter was a nature more exalted than matter and superior to it, viz. the intellectual soul. It was only by the power of the sublime mind within the soul that she came to inform matter. Mind came to give the soul the power to inform matter only by virtue of the first essence, which is the cause of the other essences, those of mind, of soul and of matter, and all natural things. Only because of the First Agent did the sensible things become beautiful and splendid, but this action took place only through the medium of mind and soul." Then he said: "It is the true first essence that pours forth life, first upon mind, then upon soul, then upon the natural things, this being the Creator, who is absolute good." How well and how rightly does this philosopher describe the Creator when he says "He created mind, soul and nature and all things else." (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, ed. Badawī, I, 26.16–27.8; trans. Lewis 1959, 231)

The "Allegorist" credits Plato with the (admittedly Aristotelian) hylomorphic doctrine and sides with him in the assessment of the emanation of divine power through the medium of the Intellect and the cosmic Soul. This account of divine causality culminates in the claim that the First Agent, the First Essence, and the Pure Good are one and the same thing: the Creator. The enthusiastic comment on "Plato's" doctrine—"How well and how rightly . . ."—paves the way for "Aristotle" to turn into the learned disciple who warrants for the correct interpretation of the master's doctrine. Once established the harmony between his own views and "Plato's," he sets for himself the task of avoiding a possible misunderstanding: since creation is an "action" that "took place through the medium of mind and soul," and since it is described as a sequence of deeds ("*first* upon mind, *then* upon soul, *then* upon the natural things"), one may infer that God's creation was performed at a given time, as suggested also by the narrative of the *Timaeus*—a highly problematic conclusion indeed, since in this way God himself seems to be submitted to time. But "Aristotle" explains that the sequence is only due to the limitations of language (*lafẓ*), because language cannot convey the notion of priority if not through time:

> But whoever hears the philosopher's words must not take them literally (*ilā lafẓihi*) and imagine that the Creator fashioned the creation in time. If anyone imagines that of him from his [i.e., Plato's] mode of expression, he did but so express himself through wishing to follow the custom of the ancients. The ancients were compelled to mention time in connection with the beginning of creation because they wanted to describe the genesis of things, and they were compelled to introduce time into their description of genesis and into their description of the creation—which was not in time at all—in order to distinguish between the exalted first causes and the lowly secondary causes. The reason is that when a man wishes to elucidate and recognize cause he is compelled to mention time, since the cause is bound to be prior to

> its effect, and one imagines that priority means time and that every agent performs his action in time. But it is not so; not every agent performs his action in time, nor is every cause prior to its effect in time. If you wish to know whether this act is temporal or not, consider the agent: if he be subject to time then is the act subject to time, inevitably, and if the cause is temporal so too is the effect. The agent and the cause indicate the nature of the act and the effect, if they be subject to time or not subject to it. (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, ed. Badawī, I, 27.8–28.3; trans. Lewis 1959, 231)

This passage sheds light on the scope of this crucial section of the ps.-*Theology*. Should the exegesis of "Plato's" utterances be intended to reconcile the doctrine of the philosophers with the Qurʾān, it would surprisingly miss the mark: indeed, a literal interpretation of the *Timaeus* would fit better with the narratives of creation that feature in the sacred book of Islam, and the emphasis laid here on the conventional nature of the accounts that include time would rather fan the flames of a controversy between philosophy and religion than warrant for the Islamic orthodoxy of Greek thought. Thus, the scope of "Aristotle" in providing the key to the correct interpretation of "Plato's" doctrine of creation cannot be apologetic. Rather, "Aristotle's" account is meant to grant a firm footing to the theory of the "harmony between Plato and Aristotle" on the crucial issue of the causality of the First Principle, a move that presupposes the awareness of the objections against the *Timaeus* raised by Aristotle in the *De Caelo*: one should not forget that the *De Caelo* was known in the circle of al-Kindī, where the ps.-*Theology* was born (Endress 1997), and to some extent also the *Timaeus* was (Arnzen 2012).

The interpretation of divine causality as an action that, prima facie similar to a process, in reality is performed in no time is typically Neoplatonic, but what is most interesting here is the fact "Aristotle's" account depends upon Philoponus's reply to Proclus. In his *De Aeternitate mundi* Philoponus came to grips with Proclus's eternalist arguments, listed in a work (*Eighteenth Arguments on the Eternity of the Cosmos*) that has come down to us in Greek only through Philoponus's quotations. One of these arguments inferred from the changeless nature of the divine is the impossibility for the Demiurge to produce anything new. In purely Neoplatonic vein, Philoponus retorted that the suprasensible principles always operate according to their own nature, not according to the nature of the lower realities they produce; hence, the Demiurge "operates without subdivision on divisible things, in unitary way on multiple things, and always in the same way on changeable things" (*De Aet. mundi*, ed. Rabe 1899, 617.15–18). The *De Aeternitate mundi* was known to al-Kindī and in his circle (Walzer 1957, 190–96; Endress 1973, 15–17; Ivry 1974, 144–62; Davidson 1987, 106–15; Hasnaoui 1994), and it is revealing to see the creation described in the ps.-*Theology* as an action whose quality is assigned by the agent, performed in no time because the agent is above time. This account, clearly inspired by Philoponus, is put in the mouth of the "Allegorist"—"Aristotle"—and emphasized as a point made by "Plato." When, later on, the ps.-*Theology* is quoted in the *Harmonization of the Two Opinions of the Two Sages, Plato the Divine and Aristotle*, its author will insist on the fact that the philosophers alone can provide good arguments for creation out of nothing. If one relies on the symbolic language of the Scripture, one is left with the idea of production out of something preexistent—water, foam, smoke, clay—and this does not do justice to God's absolute power to create out of nothing. Only philosophy disposes satisfactorily of the anthropomorphic narratives that misrepresent God's action as if it were that of a craftsman in need of a preexistent matter (ed. Martini Bonadeo, 63.16–64.6 and 66.1–67.3; English trans. Butterworth 2001, 154–57). Also al-Fārābī's definition of creation, in the *Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Perfect State* (ed. Walzer 1985, 92.8–10), as an act accomplished without any movement, without instruments, without any change whatsoever, testifies to the adoption of the Neoplatonic notion of causality, with which the *falāsifa* were acquainted through the texts produced within the circle of al-Kindī: the ps.-*Theology* and the *Liber de Causis*.

The ps.-*Theology* shows an overarching concern with the issue of God's causality. Very often we can read in it adaptations of Plotinus's accounts of intelligible causality, which pave the way for the well-known formulas of the *Liber de Causis* about the First Principle as that pure Being which creates by its own being, without instruments, with no change, and in no time. This topic appears with some emphasis at the very end of the ps.-*Theology*. Chapter 10, the last one, consists of three blocks of Plotinian writings: the short treatise V 2[11], *On the Origin and Order of the Beings Which Come after the First*; a long section from the treatise VI 7[38], *How the Multitude of the Forms Came into Being, and on the Good*; finally, a section from the treatise V 8[31], *On the Intelligible Beauty*. Here Plotinus argues against the literal interpretation of the *Timaeus*, which may lead to the conclusion, widespread in Gnostic circles, that the principle that fashioned this universe operated like a craftsman, making first the choice whether to produce an artifact or not, then planning his deeds, then again himself doing the job step by step. This counts for Plotinus as a complete misunderstanding of the *Timaeus*, as he repeats time and again in his treatises; in particular, in V 8[31] he protests against those who imagine that the demiurgic "reasoning" about the cosmos can be taken at its face value (V 8[31], 7.1–17). In the final part of the ps.-*Theology*, this doctrine is endorsed and adapted on two points: what Plotinus says about the divine Intellect is referred to the First Cause itself, and the production of the universe is understood as creation. Once again, in what follows the italics indicate the sentences taken almost literally from the Greek; the rest is Arabic adaptation.

> *Who will not wonder at the power of that noble and divine substance, that it originated things without reflection or investigation of their causes* but originated them by the mere fact of its being? Its being is the cause of the causes and therefore its being *has no need*, in originating things, *of investigating* their causes, *or of cunning* in bringing them well into existence and perfection, because it is the cause of causes, as we said above, being self-sufficient without need of any cause or contemplation or investigation. *We are going to cite an example supporting our description, for this statement of ours*. We say that *the accounts of the ancients are unanimous, that this universe did not come into being by its own act* or by chance, but came from a skilful and surpassing craftsman. But we must investigate his fashioning of this universe: *whether the craftsman first reflected*, when he wished to fashion it, *and thought within himself that first he must create an earth standing in the middle of the universe, then after that water, to*

> *be above the earth*, then create air and put it above the water, then create fire and put it above the air, *then create a heaven* and put it above the fire, surrounding all things, *then create animals with various forms suited to each creature of them, and make their members, internal and external*, following the description they follow, suited to their functions; *so he formed the things in his mind* and reflected over the perfection of his knowledge, *then began creating the works of creation* one by one, in the way he previously reflected and thought. No one must imagine that this description applies to the wise Creator, for that is absurd and impossible and inappropriate to that perfect, surpassing and noble substance. (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, X, ed. Badawī, 161.16–162.3; trans. Lewis 1959, 393)

In his interpretation of the narrative of the *Timaeus*, Plotinus did not limit himself to following the path laid out in the Platonic school, which consisted in vindicating the didascalic nature of an account that deploys a logical structure in a chronological sequence. He also interpreted this narrative in the light of his own understanding of the theory of Ideas. For Plotinus, the philosophical truth of Plato's doctrine lies in that, in spite of Aristotle's irony (*De Gen. et corr.* II 9, 335 b 9–16; cf. *Metaph.* A.9, 991b3–9), it is precisely *because* Forms are not involved in the process of producing something that they are causes. Their causality consists in being each of them what it is: the intelligible principle that assigns the rationale behind the processes whose outcome is a thing. In order to "produce" the logical structure of a thing, Form must "do" nothing if not being what it is: the model whose instantiation is the logical structure of a given being. This philosophical doctrine, which lies in the background of images like the emanation of heat from fire, is adopted in the ps.-*Theology* as the most natural explanation of the way in which "the wise Creator" operates, and it is "Aristotle" who propounds this explanation of Plato's doctrine of creation. The "cause of the causes" produces by the mere fact of its being—*bi-anniyyatihi faqaṭ, per esse suum tantum*: a formulaic expression that will dominate the accounts of creation as a changeless and timeless emanation of the causal power of the First Principle, from al-Fārābī to Avicenna and beyond.

> He does not need any instrument in the origination of things because he is the cause of instruments, it being he that originated them, and in what he originates he needs nothing of his origination. Now that the unsoundness and impossibility of this doctrine are made plain, we say that there is, between him and his creation, no intermediate thing on which he reflects and the help of which he seeks, but that he originated things by the mere fact of its being. (ps.-*Theology*, X, ed. Badawī, 163.4–8; trans. Lewis 1959, 395)

In the *Book of the Exposition by Aristotle on the Pure Good*, which after the translation into Latin by Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187) will be known as the *Liber de Causis*, creation by the mere fact of the Creator's being is assessed as follows:

> Therefore, let us return and say that every agent that acts through its being alone is neither a connecting link nor another mediating thing. The connecting link between

> an agent and its effect is nothing but an addition to being, as when an agent and its effect are through an instrument and [the agent] does not act through its being. . . . But an agent [in which] there is no connecting link at all between itself and its effect is a true agent and a true ruler. (*Liber de Causis* 19, ed. Bardenhewer 1882, 96.6–8; trans. Taylor et al. 1996, 120–21)

The uniqueness of the causality of the First Principle consists, in the Arabic Plotinus, precisely in that it operates without anything preexistent, only out of its being and because of its absolute self-sufficiency: this is why it is "the cause of the causes." The First Cause alone is capable of acting in this way. Unlike it, the suprasensible principles that transmit the causal power of the First Cause to visible things—Intellect and the cosmic Soul—operate only because their causality is included in and supported by this power. Another passage of the ps.-*Theology* with no counterpart in the Greek, this too located in the last chapter, conveys the views of the author of the adaptation of Plotinus. These ideas will have a long-lasting influence on Arabic-Islamic philosophy:

> You must understand that mind and soul and the other intelligible things are from the first originator, not passing away or disappearing, on account of their originating from the first cause without intermediary, whereas nature and sense-perception and the other natural things perish and fall under corruption because they are effects of causes that are caused, that is, of the mind through the medium of the soul. But of the natural things one has a longer duration than the others, being the most lasting: that depends on the remoteness of the thing from its cause, or its proximity, and on the multitude or paucity of causes in it: for when the causes of the thing are few its duration is longer, and if its causes are many the thing is of shorter duration. We must understand that natural things are linked one to another: when one of them passes away it comes to its neighbour until it reaches the heavenly bodies, then soul, then mind. All things are fixed in mind and mind is fixed in the first cause, and the first cause is the beginning and end of all things: from it do they originate and to it is their returning, as we have often said. (ps.-*Theology*, X, ed. Badawī, 138.16–139.5; trans. Lewis 1959, 297)

The great chain of being has its beginning in the First Principle, the One, the Pure Being and Pure Good: every degree depends on it and its power reaches the sublunar beings through the medium of Intellect and Soul. In the first chapter "Aristotle" had amplified Plotinus's sentence about the descent of the soul by a sentence of his own, concerning its return to the realm of the incorporeal, eternal principles. Here, toward the end of the ps.-*Theology*, we find another amplification in the same vein. Plotinus was dealing with the destiny of the soul after the end of the body it gives life to (V 2[11], 2.21–23), and the passage quoted above presents once again the cosmic hierarchy of the principles: the First Cause, Intellect, and Soul. At the beginning of the ps.-*Theology* as well as here, toward the end, the description of the chain of being is dominated by the pattern of the double journey of the soul, the way down along the necessary declension of the degrees of being, and the way back toward its homeland. What will become, in Avicenna's phrasing, the "provenance and destination" is one of the most influential topics created in the ps.-*Theology*.

> This treatise of mine contains the fruit of two great sciences, one of which is characterized by being about metaphysical, and the other physical, matters. The fruit of the science dealing with metaphysical matters is that part of it known as theology (*Uthūlūjiyyā*), which treats [the subjects of] Lordship, the first principle, and the relationship which beings bear to it according to their rank. The fruit of the science dealing with physical matters is the knowledge that the human soul survives and that it has a Destination. (Avicenna, *The Provenance and Destination*, introduction, trans. Gutas 1988, 31)

The literary traces of the ps.-*Theology* can be detected in many works of classical and postclassical Arabic philosophy. In addition to the authors and texts mentioned above, the ps.-*Theology* is alluded to or quoted by al-ʿĀmirī (*Book on the Afterlife*, ed. Rowson 1984, V, 88–95; VII, 102–3; XV, 140–41), by Miskawayh (*al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, ed. ʿUḍayma 1987, 99.9–12), by Avicenna, who has commented upon it (Badawī 1947, 37–74 and Vajda 1951), by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (*Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, Badawī 1955, 209–40, and Martini Bonadeo 2013), and in the *Ishrāqī* tradition (Rizvi 2007). The Safavid theologians of the schools of Shiraz and Isfahan show a renewed interest for the basic works of *falsafa*, tracing back to the age of the translations: among them, the ps.-*Theology* (Endress 2001, Di Branco 2014), as is made evident from Mullā Ṣadrā's *Four Journeys*; Saʿīd Qummī (d. 1102/1691) wrote a commentary on the ps.-*Theology* (Āshtiyānī 1978). The topic of the ultimate provenance of the soul from the First Principle and of its return to it through the conjunction with the intelligible realm is the most pervasive of the doctrines of the ps.-*Theology*, permeating as it does also the thought of philosophers who do not exhibit any direct knowledge of the Arabic Plotinus.

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CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF *FALSAFA*

Al-Kindī (d. 873), *On First Philosophy*

EMMA GANNAGÉ

Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindī (ca. 185/801–ca. 252/870), "the philosopher of the Arabs" as the biographical tradition likes to call him, was raised in Kufa, where his father was governor, to a family whose noble Arab lineage has been emphasized by all bibliographers. Very little is known about his life otherwise. According to the bio-bibliographical tradition, he held an important position at the caliph's court under al-Maʾmūn (198/813–218/833) and al-Muʿtaṣim (218/833–227/842), the latter appointing him as a preceptor for his son Aḥmad. However, he fell into disgrace under al-Mutawakkil (232/847–247/861), victim either of the intrigues of the Banū Mūsā, his rivals in court, or of his Muʿtazilī inclinations.

In a few words Dimitri Gutas encapsulated Kindī best as "a polymath and a universal scholar imbued with the spirit of encyclopedism which was characteristic of early 9th c. Bagdad and which was fostered by the translation movement" (Gutas 2004, 201). Indeed, al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* lists more than 250 titles under his name. They show an astonishing range of interests, reflecting all the sciences of his time. Around 50 of these (maybe more) seem to have been devoted to philosophy. *On First Philosophy* is the most important and the most famous of them.

2.1. TITLE

Our treatise bears the title *Kitāb al-Kindī ilā l-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā* (*Book of al-Kindī to al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh On First Philosophy*) in the only manuscript in which it has reached us (MS Istanbul, Aya Sofia 4832, ff. 196r–206r). Kindī himself refers to it by the same title, that is, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, in his treatise *On the Explanation of the Prostration of the Outermost Body and Its Obedience to God the Almighty and Exalted* (*Fī l-ibāna ʿan sujūd al-jirm al-aqṣā wa-ṭāʿatihi li-llāh ʿazza wa-jall*)

(*Prostration* hereafter) (*Œuvres*, 187.3; *Rasāʾil* 1:251.3), as well as in *On the Explanation of the Proximate Efficient Cause of Generation and Corruption* (*Fī l-ibāna ʿan al-ʿilla al-fāʿila al-qarība li-l-kawn wa-l-fasād*) (*Proximate* hereafter) (*Rasāʾil* 1:215.8), and in the prologue of his treatise *On the Great Art* (*Fī l-ṣināʿa al-ʿuẓmā*), namely his paraphrase of the first eight chapters of the first book of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, where it is referred to as *Kitāb fī l-falsafa al-ūlā al-dākhila* (Rosenthal 1956, 442; Kindī, *Ṣināʿa*, 127). However, the same treatise is listed by Nadīm (*Fihrist*, 1, 255) followed by Qifṭī (*Taʾrīkh*, 368 and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn*, 1, 206) as the *Book of First Philosophy, on What Is Above (beyond) Physics, and of Oneness* (*Kitāb al-Falsafa l-ūlā fīmā dūn al-ṭabīʿiyyāt wa-l-tawḥīd*).

Al-Falsafa al-ūlā or first philosophy is Aristotle's third designation of theoretical philosophy (*Metaph*. VI.1, 1026a29 ff. and XI.4, 1061b19 and 28 as well as 7, 1064a33–b3), and indeed Kindī treats first philosophy as a theology, though definitely not the theology of *Metaphysics* XII. As has been already noted, Aristotle's "theology" makes sense in the context of an eternal universe that is set in motion by a primary object of desire (see *Œuvres*, 4); whereas, as we will shortly see, Kindī shows in the second chapter that the universe is not eternal. It is created and has a creator. For Kindī then, first philosophy is the science of the first Cause, which is the "cause of time," as well as the science of the first Truth, which is the cause of every truth. Expressed in the prologue, this statement is echoed again in the conclusion of the treatise, which ends with the apparition of a first true One and first Creator, cause of the creation. The true One is thus the One God Almighty of the revealed religion, and the henology of chapter 4 ends with a description of the creative action of the One in which the philosophical theology of Neoplatonic inspiration is interwoven with Muslim religious and theological concepts in an intricate fabric that places Kindī at the crossroads of several traditions all at once (Jolivet 1984, 322–23; Ivry 1974, 14 ff.).

2.2. SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

The *Book on First Philosophy* (*FPh* hereafter) is one of the longest of Kindī's treatises that have reached us, and yet it is incomplete. The fourth and last chapter ends with the mention of a sequel: "Let us complete this chapter (*fann*) and follow it up with what naturally comes after" (*Rasāʾil* 1:162.15; *Œuvres*, 99), and the colophon of the text makes this understanding clear when it says: "End of the *first part* (*al-juzʾ al-awwal*) of the book." Cross-references in Kindī's writings, as well as external evidence, corroborate the assumption of a larger work.

Aiming primarily to prove the oneness of God, the first and only surviving part of the treatise consists of four chapters that form a consistent unit (for a handy and yet detailed outline see *Œuvres*, 1–5). From the first page, which introduces the first Truth, cause of all truths, to the last page closing this first part with the apparition of a true One cause of the unity and the existence of all things, the treatise unfolds by following a very tight argument in which each step paves the way for the rest of the discussion. Despite some redundancy and an often obscure style, the treatise is organized in order to make room for a "henology" that unfurls progressively in chapters 3 and 4, leading to the thesis toward which the whole treatise seems to aim: the true One, who is the principle of unity and hence the principle of existence of all beings, on the one hand, and the absolutely transcendent God that can be approached only through a negative theology, on the other, are one and the same principle.

2.3. Sources, Program, and Method

Even though he is credited with having inaugurated the philosophical tradition in Islam, Kindī is part of a tradition to which he stakes a claim, as can be clearly demonstrated from the prologue of *FPh* (*Œuvres*, 13.15–22; *Rasāʾil* 1:103.4–11):

> We should not be ashamed of appreciating the truth and acquiring the truth wherever it comes from, even if it comes from remote races and different nations. For him who seeks the truth, nothing is worthier than the truth, and the truth is neither belittled nor demeaned by him who reports it or by him who brings it. Nobody is demeaned by the truth, but everybody is ennobled by the truth.
>
> We would do well—since we are striving to perfect our species and in this the truth resides—in this book to stick to our habits in all the subjects [we have dealt with]: to present what the ancients have dealt with completely, in the most straightforward and easiest way for those who will follow this path, and to complete what they did not deal with completely, following, in so doing, the custom of the language and the usages of the time, to the best of our ability.[1]

Indeed, Kindī's name is associated with the translation movement of scientific and philosophical works from Greek into Arabic (Hasnawi 1992, 655), though it is generally admitted that he did not know Greek. He was rather a "patron" around whom gravitated a group of translators, recognizable by a distinctive terminology and phraseology as well as by an often loose method of translation. Arabic versions of several of Aristotle's works have been produced in the so-called "circle" of Kindī as well as important fragments of Proclus and Philoponus often in the garb of Alexander of Aphrodisias (Endress 1973, 1997; Zimmermann 1986, 1994; Hasnawi 1994; for an annotated list of the main works translated in Kindī's circle see Endress 2007).

The ultimate aim of this activity of selecting, translating, paraphrasing, and rearranging has been clearly expressed in the lines quoted above and falls under more than one heading: (1) assimilation of Greek philosophy and science; (2) completing what the ancients did not achieve and hence developing Aristotle's metaphysic into a theology conveying a monotheistic and creationist interpretation of the Neoplatonic system that is compatible with the creed of the One and Unique God, the *tawḥīd* of Islam (Endress 1997, 54; Zimmermann 1986, 119), though there is no scholarly consensus as to the extent of the implication of al-Kindī as well as to the intentional reordering and misattribution (D'Ancona 2011, 1033); (3) creating a philosophical and scientific terminology in order to put the Greek philosophical and scientific corpus within the reach of his own community.

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[1] All translations of al-Kindī's texts are mine and based on *Œuvres*, unless otherwise specified. References to *Rasāʾil*, which I sometimes follow, are always mentioned along with it. For an English translation of al-Kindī's philosophical works see Adamson and Pormann 2012.

The breadth and depth of the activity of Kindī's circle as well as the wide array of sources translated will, not surprisingly, find a direct echo in Kindī's own work, not only in terms of doctrinal influence, but also in terms of method and style. Maybe more than any of his other works, *FPh* reflects the influences that have shaped the worldview of its author.

2.4. ECLECTICISM

It is difficult to locate Kindī within a specific philosophical tradition. As has been already noted by Ivry (1974, 11–21), despite an "ambivalent usage" of what might look very close to a Neoplatonic terminology, *FPh* does not develop into a Neoplatonic structure. From Neoplatonism Kindī borrows a henology consistent with the Muslim *tawḥīd*, but ignores the theory of hypostasis as well as the emanationist system (Hasnawi 1992, 655). The necessary existence of an absolute transcendent true One that provides existence to all beings while dispensing unity to them will lead to a negative theology close to the Muʿtazilī notion of *tawḥīd* as well as to the doctrine of the One proper to the *Plotiniana Arabica*. If one can find in *FPh* echoes of the *Theology of Aristotle* (see Endress 1973; D'Ancona 1998), these remain nevertheless tenuous, as noted by Hasnawi (1992, 655) compared to the more significant dependence on the Arabic fragments of Proclus's *Elements of Theology* (Endress 1973, esp. 242–46) as well as the *Platonic Theology* (Jolivet 1979), though we do not know of any Arabic translation of the latter. The influence of John Philoponus on Kindī's arguments against the eternity of the world has also been highlighted (Walzer 1962, 190–96; Davidson 1969, 370–73; Davidson 1987, 106–16), though the structure of the argumentation is different (Hasnawi 1992, 655).

Conversely *FPh* unfolds within a clearly Aristotelian framework from which it departs progressively, while it continues to operate with some of its main concepts, for example, the categories and the predicables, but also the concepts of causality, time, body, and motion. Ivry (1974, 16–18) has shown the influence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* I and II on the opening remarks of *FPh*. Aristotle's physics looms large also, and al-Kindī borrows from the *De Caelo* even more than the *Physics*, in order to reach often non-Aristotelian conclusions.

Drawing from Aristotle, the Neoplatonic tradition as well as the Greek commentators, *FPh* elaborates a complex and original synthesis that culminates with a demonstration of the absolute unity of the first Cause where the philosophical discourse ultimately yields to a theological development that concludes with the identity of the Neoplatonic true One with the Creator and One God of Islam.

2.5. Mathematical Method

In several of his extant philosophical treatises, including not only *FPh* but also *On the Quiddity of What Cannot Be Infinite and What Is Called Infinite* (*Quiddity* hereafter), and his *Epistle to Muḥammad b. al-Jahm on the Oneness of God and the Finiteness of the Body of the Universe* (*Oneness* hereafter), as well as the one to Muḥammad al-Khurasānī *Explaining the Finiteness of the Body of the Universe* (*Finiteness* hereafter), Kindī uses a geometrical method of argumentation clearly inspired by Euclid's *Elements*. As a matter of fact, the reader of *FPh* cannot but be struck by the extensive usage of the axiomatic method, for example in chapter 2, and the proof by reductio ad absurdum that looms large in Kindī's method of argumentation throughout the whole treatise. The above-mentioned treatises are all concerned by proving the finiteness of the universe, and, in one way or another, each one of them deals with one of the issues addressed in the second chapter of *FPh*. In all of them Kindī follows, more or less, the same Euclidian pattern of argumentation: providing first definitions of the main terms, then listing the "first true and immediately intelligible premises" (*Rasāʾil* 1:114.12; *Œuvres* 29.8), in other words the axioms, and finally proceeding to the proof by deduction often following an argument by reductio ad absurdum (Rashed 2008, 132).

Al-Kindī was himself a scientist and a mathematician who, according to Nadīm's *Fihrist*, devoted at least sixty treatises to mathematics in its four branches (*Fihrist*, 256–58; Rashed 1993, 7), among them several commentaries on Euclid's *Elements*. However, what is at stake here is the application of the geometrical method to the philosophical inquiry, despite the fact that some of the treatises mentioned above are listed by Nadīm, under the "books on astronomy" (*kutub al-falakiyyāt*). This being said, Kindī wrote also a treatise titled *That Philosophy Can Only Be Acquired through the Mathematical Science* (*Fī annahu lā tunālu al-falsafa illā bi-ʿilm al-riyāḍiyyāt*, see *Fihrist*, 255), which is no longer extant.

At any rate, it is worth noting that in the second chapter of *FPh*, he establishes explicitly the mathematical examination (*al-faḥṣ al-taʿlīmī/al-faḥṣ al-riyāḍī*) as the most appropriate method of investigation for "what has no matter" (*Œuvres* 23.20,23; *Rasāʾil* 1:111.1,4), that is, metaphysics. Al-Kindī's philosophy is "written in geometrical terms" (Jolivet 2004, 679) paradoxically in order to reach, through sound but industrious geometrical proofs, the truths of the "divine science" (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*) immediately accessible to the prophets (for further details on the place of mathematics in al-Kindī's classification of theoretical sciences, see Endress 2003, 129-130; Gutas 2004; Adamson 2007a, 30-37; Gannagé, forthcoming).

2.6. Creation of a Philosophical Terminology

The program Kindī draws at the beginning of *FPh* leaves little doubt as to his awareness of being the first philosopher to write in Arabic. The foremost philosophers he invokes as his forerunners did not share his language (*al-mubarrizīn min al-mutafalsifīn qablana, min ghayr ahl lisāninā, Œuvres* 11.21; *Rasāʾil* 1:102.5), as he is careful to point out. That places him as the direct heir to a Greek philosophical tradition and puts on his shoulders a burden he outlines in the introduction of *FPh* (*Œuvres* 13.19–22; *Rasāʾil* 1:103.8–11): that is, to present what the ancients have dealt with completely and to complete what they left unfinished, "*following, in so doing, the custom of the language* and the usages of the time."

Language is at the heart of Kindī's enterprise of transmission of Greek philosophy and sciences into Arabic, as he himself emphasizes by constantly referring to his own community, in that context, as "the people speaking our language" (*ahl lisāninā*) (Rosenthal 1956, 445 n. 2). Gerhard Endress has shown that Kindī was the patron and the *spiritus rector* of a circle of translators recognizable by a distinctive phraseology and terminology—they would also share with Kindī's own writings—characterized, for example, by the use of loanwords or direct transliterations from Greek, the formation of neologisms, and an often rough style reflecting Greek stylistic constructions (Endress 1973, 75–155; Endress 1997, 58–62).

FPh is emblematic of such a philosophical terminology, which was still in the making at that early stage of the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic. It is fraught with neologisms intended to render abstract universals or philosophical concepts for which no Arabic term had yet been coined. Among the most representative examples are terms gravitating around the concept of being, like *inniyya* or *anniyya*. Most probably derived from the Arabic particle *inna* or *anna* and substantified with the addition of the suffix *-iyya* in order to denote an abstract notion (Endress 1973, 77 ff.; Ivry 1974, 120–21; Adamson 2002, 299–300), it is used mostly with the meaning of existence in the affirmative sense of the existence of a particular thing but can also refer to being in general as well as to essence. Likewise, *inniyyāt* or *anniyyāt* refer most often to "the things that exist," hence echoing the Greek τὰ ὄντα.

Inniyya seems to be the equivalent of *huwiyya*, and they are often used interchangeably (e.g., *Œuvres*, 35.14–15 and 37.7–8; *Rasāʾil* 1:119.16 and 120.17–18), though the latter, being derived from the pronoun *huwa*, has sometimes the sense of being an entity, an ipseity (Ivry 1974, 159). More unusual is *tahawwī* or *taʾyīs* for bringing into existence (e.g., *Œuvres*, 41, 5; 97, 8–9; *Rasāʾil* 1:123.3, 162.1). The latter is derived from *ays*, attested in the earliest Arabic dictionary compiled by al-Khalīl (d. ca. 175/791)[2] as referring also to particular existence, but which, like *inniyya* and *huwiyya*, can signify being in general, especially in opposition to *lays* used as a substantive meaning nonbeing, particularly in chapter 3.

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[2] See al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, ed. M. al-Makhzūmī and I. al-Samarrāʾī, 8 vols. (Baghdad: Dār wa-maktabat al-Hilāl), 7:300, 301. Reference kindly provided to me by Abdallah Soufan.

2.7. Prologue

The treatise opens with a prologue following a clear structure. It is first a praise and a defense of philosophy justifying its practice as subordinated to the study of the "science of the first Cause," considered as the noblest part of philosophy. It also lays the main points that will be developed throughout the treatise. Finally it includes a program and exposes a method: the philosopher has to build on the results of the ancient philosophers, who have paved the way in our research of the truth, and to pursue in the same way in order to further expand on them.

2.7.1. What Is First Philosophy?

Following the dedication to the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh, the first chapter opens with a definition of "the art of philosophy" as being the "highest human art" and the noblest in rank "whose definition is the science of the things in their true natures insofar as man is capable of that" (*Œuvres*, 9. 8–14; *Rasāʾil* 1: 97.4–98.2):

> The aim of the philosopher is to reach truth (*iṣābat al-ḥaqq*) in his science and to act according to the truth in his praxis. It is not an endless activity, for when we reach the truth, we stop and the activity ceases. We don't find what we are seeking from the truth without finding a cause. The cause of the being (*wujūd*) and stability (*thabāt*) of everything is the truth, for everything that has an existence (*inniyya*) has a truth (*ḥaqīqa*), *therefore the truth exists (mawjūd) necessarily since the existents exist (idh al-inniyāt mawjūda)*. The noblest philosophy and the highest in rank is the first philosophy, I mean the science of the first True who is the cause of every truth.[3]

As has been already observed, Kindī seems to follow here an eclectic approach (Ivry 1972, 124; *Œuvres* 101 n. 1): while borrowing mainly from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* I and

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[3] The sentence in italics involves a reading that contrasts with most of the editions and translations of *FPh* (see, e.g., *Œuvres* 9.13; *Rasāʾil* 1:99.9–10 [*fa-l-ḥaqqu iḍṭirrāran mawjūdun idhan li-inniyyāt mawjūdatin*]; Ivry 1974, 55.16; and Adamson and Pormann 2012, §2), that tend to favor a Neoplatonic understanding of that passage, where the existence of beings is seen as derived from the necessary existence of the true One, though it is worth noting that the expression "the true One" does not appear in this definition. Our reading, which does not entail any amendment to the manuscript wording, is in line with Ibn Hazm's reading (see *Rasāʾil* 2:26.3 and Ibn Ḥazm, *Radd*, 189.6). It restores the inductive nature of the argument, which moves from the empirical existence of beings to the existence of a cause to such beings. Such a method of argumentation pervades much of the treatise and is characteristic of al-Kindī's style, as is the call to sensible evidence that comes up every now and then in the course of an argument.

II (esp. *Metaph.* II.1, 993b19–20), the overall definition seems also to be inspired by the prologues of the Alexandrian commentaries to Porphyre's *Isagoge* that used to start with "preliminary explanations on what is philosophy in general," including an enumeration of six different definitions of philosophy (Hadot 1989, 23), a division of philosophy between theory and practice (Hein 1985, 86 ff.), as well as an enumeration of the four Aristotelian causes (matter, form, efficient, and final) combined with the four epistemological questions, "whether," "what," "which," and "why" that we find also reproduced by Kindī few lines below (*Œuvres* 11.5; *Rasāʾil* 1:101.5) (Altmann and Stern 2009, 13 ff.). Actually, in his *Epistle on the Definitions and the Descriptions of Things*[4] (*Definitions* hereafter), Kindī provides a series of six definitions of philosophy, avowedly inspired by the Neoplatonic commentators (*al-falsafa, ḥaddahā al-qudamāʾ bi-ʿiddat ḥurūf*) without, however, corresponding exactly to the list they used to produce. The definition of *FPh* comes close to the fourth definition that considers philosophy "from the point of view of its pre-eminence" as being "the art of arts and the science of sciences" (*Rasāʾil* 1:172–73; Altmann and Stern 2009, 28–30; Ivry 1974, 125) as well as to the last one that characterizes philosophy as "the knowledge of the eternal, universal things, of their existences (*inniyyātuhā*), their quiddities (*māʾiyyātuhā*), and their causes, *according to man's capacity*," as has been already noted (*Cinq Epîtres* 1976, 58). Worth noting is that the same division between theoretical and practical philosophy occurs, in similar terms, in the prologue of *On the Great Art* (*Fī l-Ṣināʿa l-ʿuẓmā*), where it is clearly inspired by Ptolemy's preface to his *Almagest* (for further developments on that issue and the relationship between *FPh* and *On the Great Art* see Gannagé forthcoming).

At any rate, al-Kindī's main source of inspiration, here, remains Aristotle's description of philosophy in *Metaph.* II.1, 993b20 as "a knowledge of truth" that he reads in Asṭāth's translation as *ʿilm al-ḥaqq* and understands as the knowledge of the ultimate nature of things and the first principles of beings. Worth noting that *Ḥaqq* and *Awwal* are among the names of God, which allows Kindī to identify first philosophy and theology as the "science of the first Truth which is the cause of all truth," being "the cause of the existence and stability (or permanence, *thabāt*) of all things," hence reconciling the religious belief in a supreme Truth with the Aristotelian doctrine of knowledge as search for cause (D'Ancona 1998, 849).

First philosophy defined as the "science of the first Truth" will thus be further specified as "the science of the first Cause" (echoing *Metaph.* VI.1, 1026a18–23 as mentioned by Ivry 1974, 121) "given that all the content of philosophy is subsumed (*munṭawin*) in the science of the first Cause," which is thus first in nobility, first in genus, first from the point of view of what is scientifically the most certain, but also first in time "since the first Cause is the cause of time" (D'Ancona 1998, 853, maintains that next to *Metaph.* II.1, 996b10–14, this passage echoes both the preface of the *Theology of Aristotle* as well as the text itself, reproducing "the late Neoplatonic pattern of the inclusion of all the theoretical sciences within metaphysics"). Causality in time is a further hint toward a theory of creation and the refutation of the eternity of the world that is the object of the next chapter. Such a definition concludes the first part of the prologue, justifying the title of the whole treatise and giving it its overall orientation.

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[4] On the complex textual transmission of this treatise, which has been edited more than once, see Adamson 2007a, 40 and references *ad in.*

2.7.2. Assimilation of Greek Philosophy

Next, Kindī exposes the program and method we have recalled above and which he has reiterated in several of his scientific books (see, e.g., the first lines of his *De aspectibus* in Rashed 1997, 438): to build on the results of the Greeks and pursue them in the same way in order to further expand on them. The same program, in almost the same terms, closes the prologue of *On the Great Art* (Kindī, *Ṣināʿa*, 129.8–130.2). Actually, Kindī draws up a cumulative history of knowledge that seems to be freely inspired by *Metaph*. II.1, 993a30–b4 and 993b12–14: we should be grateful to all those who contributed before us to the truth, even if little, since by the union of all a significant amount has been collected. Those have been our "forerunners and our associates" because they shared with us the product of their thoughts.

> Had they not existed we would not have been able to collect, even if we were to inquire about them fervently throughout our lives, these *true principles* (*al-awāʾil al-ḥaqiyya*) through which we are able to reach the *hidden ends* (*al-awākhir al-khafiyya*) of our inquiries. This [knowledge] has been collected only in preceding eras that elapsed era after era, until our present time. (*Œuvres*, 13.2–8; *Rasāʾil* 1:102.10–16)

This being said, the time factor adds to the cumulative history of knowledge the idea of a scientific progress toward an end that is absent from Aristotle (Jolivet 1993, 74). It is actually clearly inspired by Ptolemy's *Almagest*, where the notion of the scientific progress through the additional time available is expressed not only in the preface, but also in the epilogue and throughout the book (Toomer 1984, 37 and n. 11).

2.7.3. Defense of Philosophy

The apology for Greek philosophy staked out as a foundational moment in a history of scientific progress toward the truth is not incompatible with the revelation brought by the prophets. On the contrary, both share the same content as Kindī states few lines below (*Œuvres*, 15. 9–12; *Rasāʾil* 1:104.8–10):

> The knowledge of things in their true nature includes the knowledge of sovereignty (*ʿilm al-rubūbiyya*), the knowledge of oneness (*ʿilm al-waḥdāniyya*), the knowledge of excellence, and on the whole the knowledge of everything beneficial and of the way to it, while staying away from all harm and protecting oneself against it. Acquiring all these, this is what the truthful apostles brought from God, great be His praise.

The profession of such a harmony (*al-qawl ʿalā l-rubūbiyya* is also the title born by the *Theology of Aristotle*, as noted by Jolivet, see *Œuvres*, 15 n. 13 and references therein) is accompanied by a long and violent invective against unidentified opponents who "oppose the acquisition of knowledge of the things in their true nature and call it unbelief." They are contemporaries of Kindī "who have claimed speculation for themselves" (*al-muttasimūn bi-l-naẓar fī dahrinā*) and who seem to occupy high positions of power. For want of identifying these people, on whose identity there is so far no scholarly consensus, we can at least point to some elements that may help narrowing down the scope of the discussion:

The treatise is dedicated to the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim whose patronage Kindī used to benefit from, knowing that he was appointed as a tutor to his son Aḥmad. At that time he was thus in favor at the court.

The people against whom he launches his invective seem also to be in positions of power and authority as he himself underlines by describing them as occupying "fraudulent seats they have set up undeservedly." This is confirmed by Ibn Ḥazm, who identifies them as "*ahl al-riʾāsa*," when introducing an extensive part of this passage he quotes, among other extracts of *FPh*, in his refutation of Kindī's characterization of God as a cause (Ibn Ḥazm, *Radd*, 189.17).

Moreover, not only do they claim to deal with speculation (*al-muttasimūn bi-l-naẓar*), they also seem to use their positions of power in order to achieve authority in matters of religion with which they traffic (*li-al-taraʾʾus wa-l-tijāra bi-l-dīn*).

All these elements seem to point toward a group of theologians close to the sphere of power—who, at that time, must have been Muʿtazilites of some sort—as the accusation of "dirty envy," raised by Kindī, seems to hint, within the context of the fierce competition that was prevailing at the caliph's court. Given the extreme diversity of people and doctrines that characterized this early period of the movement of *iʿtizāl*, any attempt to try to identify them more precisely becomes uncertain and in any case exceeds the scope of this chapter. This being said, it seems worth noting that what is at stake here seems to be the creed of the absolute oneness of God rather than the opposition to the "philosophical inheritance of the Greeks" (see Adamson 2007a, 22–25 for the latter view). Twice during his diatribe, Kindī states, in defense of philosophy, that "the knowledge of things in their true nature" includes the knowledge of sovereignty as well as the knowledge of oneness (of God) (*Œuvres*, 15, 9, and 23). The closing lines of his tirade describe quite eloquently the object of *FPh* as "establishing the proof of the sovereignty [of God] and making evident His oneness, chasing away those who oppose Him (*al-muʿānidūn lahu*) and do not believe in Him." *FPh* seems thus a philosophical contribution to the theological discussions of the time over the concept of *tawḥīd* (for the application of the philosophical method to the treatment of theological problems see Adamson 2003). In that respect two elements are worth recalling: (1) *FPh* has passed to posterity mainly under the name of *Kitāb fī l-Tawḥīd*, as shown at the beginning of this chapter, even though al-Kindī refers to it always as *On First Philosophy*; (2) the two works that have preserved for us fragments of *FPh* have done so in relation to the issue of *tawḥīd*: directly for Ibn Ḥazm, who reproaches Kindī for having been inconsistent when describing God as a cause, which implies immediately an effect and hence precludes His oneness, while at the same time denying any multiplicity in God; indirectly for Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, who addresses the issue of God's will, hence alluding to the controversy between Ashʿarites and Muʿtazilites concerning the definition of whether God's will is an attribute of essence or of action (see *Œuvres*, 129–30 and n. 7). Even though both of them might reflect theological and philosophical issues that were shaped after the time of Kindī, they nevertheless build on *FPh* as related in a way or another to such issues.

2.8. Proving That the World Is Finite (Chapter 2)

The first chapter had concluded with the existence of the first Truth as a first Cause that is not only the cause of every truth and "of the existence and permanence of every thing" but also "the Cause of time." That entails proving the finiteness of the sensible world and hence the finiteness of body, time, and motion. The second chapter[5] thus starts with a series of preliminary methodological "admonitions" (*waṣāya*) that aim to demonstrate that "the science of what is above the natural things is the science of what does not move" (*Œuvres*, 25.9–10; *Rasāʾil* 1:111.13). It thus requires an intellectual perception only, and therefore only the mathematical method applies to it. The first part of the chapter, to which Kindī refers as an "introduction" (*muqaddima*) (*Œuvres*, 23.10; *Rasāʾil* 1:110.10), sets thus the epistemological cadre through which one has to understand the arguments against the eternity of the world that are treated in the second part.

Kindī starts by distinguishing two types of perceptions: "one closer to us and farther with respect to nature and this is the sensory perception (*wujūd al-ḥawāss*)" (*Œuvres*, 19.4–5; *Rasāʾil* 1:106.4), which is unstable due to the changing nature of its object "as it always applies to body"; and the other "more familiar to nature and farther from us, and it is the intellectual perception (*wujūd al-ʿaql*)," which is "certain through the veracity of the intellectual principles that are necessarily intelligible, like 'it is and it is not are not true of one and the same thing' is immutable" (*Œuvres*, 19.24–21.2; *Rasāʾil* 1:107.12–13). This first example that illustrates the principle of noncontradiction (Ivry 1974, 137) is followed by another more complex one: "Outside the body of the universe, there is neither void nor plenum (*lā khalāʾ wa-lā malāʾ*), meaning neither vacuity (*farāgh*) nor body." "Neither void nor plenum . . . is a thing perceived only and necessarily by the intellect through these premises that we set forth" (*Œuvres* 21.15–18; *Rasāʾil* 1:109.1–5). The argument then unfolds in two steps in order to show, first, the impossibility of the existence of an absolute void and, second, the impossibility that there exists a plenum beyond the body of the universe. "This follows necessarily and is not represented in the soul, but it is only a necessary intellectual perception (*wujūd ʿaqlī iḍṭirārī*)" (*Œuvres* 23.6–7; *Rasāʾil* 1:110.5–7).

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[5] For a discussion of the whole or parts of this chapter see Davidson 1969, 370–373; Davidson 1987, 106–16; Craig 1979; Jolivet 1993; and Adamson 2007a, chap. 4.

Kindī endorses here a thesis defended by Aristotle not exactly in the *Physics* (IV 6–9), where only the question of the impossibility of the void is raised, but rather in the *De Caelo* (278b 21ff. and 279a 5 ff.) where he finds the issue of the denial of any void outside the "extreme circumference" addressed within the demonstration denying the existence of any body and hence any plenum outside the heaven. However, Kindī does not seem here much interested in the empirical argument against the possibility of void outside the extreme limit of the universe, as noted by Ivry. He seems to be "rather thinking of the void in some absolute logical sense which allows him to establish an immediate self-contradiction of terms" (Ivry 1974, 139).

In fact, the bulk of the argument is devoted to the refutation of the possibility of a plenum outside the universe, which constitutes a step further toward his demonstration of the noneternity of the world. In order to prove that the sensible world is finite, Kindī needed to rule out, at least logically, the possibility of any plenum outside the physical world. He still had to prove that there can be no actual infinity—as he himself admits (*Œuvres* 21.25–22.1; *Rasāʾil* 1:109.14)—in order to show that the world is a finite magnitude and thus eternity applies only to the first One.

The three arguments against the eternity of the world that follow are also preceded by a series of "rules" (*qawānīn*) that need to be observed in that art, and these consist of a series of definitions concerning the nature of the eternal. They are followed by three short arguments intended to prove through a reductio ad absurdum that the eternal has no genus, nor does it undergo any corruption, alteration, or change whatsoever, and hence, "The eternal is necessarily perfect" (*fa-l-azalī tāmmun iḍṭirāran*):

> The eternal is that which does absolutely not necessitate "it is not" (*inna l-azalī huwa alladhī lam yajib "laysa huwa" muṭlaqan*); hence, as far as generation is concerned, the eternal has no "before" to its existence (*li-hawiyyatihi*); the eternal is that whose subsistence is not through something else; the eternal has no cause (*ʿilla*); the eternal has no substrate and no predicate, no agent and no reason (*sabab*)—I mean that for the sake of which it would exist, for there are no causes other than the ones previously mentioned. (*Œuvres* 27.8–11; *Rasāʾil* 1:113.1–4)

The "causes previously mentioned" are the four Aristotelian causes mentioned in chapter 1, and Kindī is thus ruling out in these premises the possibility of any physical treatment of the eternal in what follows. Having no cause, the eternal is thus naturally incompatible with any kind of change. As has been already observed (Ivry 1974, 142–43; Adamson 2007a, 98), Kindī is anticipating here the arguments of sections 3 and 4, and the "eternal" that is immutable is God. Indeed, God alone is perfect. The argument concludes from the incompatibility of eternity and change to the incompatibility of eternity and body: “Since body has a genus and species and what is eternal has no genus, the body is not the eternal (*fa-l-jirm <ghayr> al-azalī*)” (*Œuvres* 29.5; *Rasāʾil* 1:114.8–9). The three following arguments focus on proving that the world, being a body, has a beginning and an end.

2.8.1. Three Arguments against the Infinity of the World

The following arguments are also reproduced in one way or another, partially or in full, in three other short treatises Kindī devoted to the issue of the eternity of the world. *Quiddity* (*Rasāʾil* 1:193–98; *Œuvres* 149–55) reproduces with slight differences the first argument, which proves that time and body cannot be infinite, in order to show that there is no infinite in actuality. As for *Oneness* (*Rasāʾil* 1:199–207; *Œuvres* 135–47), it replicates almost verbatim important passages from *FPh* (see the introduction and the notes in *Œuvres* 149–55), to which it adds a proof of the existence of God and its oneness that is missing in *FPh*. Finally, *Finiteness* (*Rasāʾil* 1:185–92; *Œuvres* 158–65) offers mathematical demonstrations of some of the principles used in *FPh* as axioms. The issue of the eternity *a parte post* that is addressed in *FPh* is missing from the three of them (*Œuvres* 149).

2.8.1.1. *Body, Movement, and Time Do Not Precede Each Other*

The first argument against the eternity of the world in *FPh* aims at proving that body, time, and movement do not precede each other and hence, if time is finite, “the extension of the existence” of the universe is finite (Hasnawi 1992, 655). It relies on the assumption that time is not a being (*al-zamān laysa bi-mawjūd, Œuvres* 31, 23) but is an attribute of the body (*maḥmūl*) like magnitude, place, and movement (Jolivet 1993, 56). Kindī starts by proving the impossibility of an infinite magnitude:

> Let us say now that no body, nor anything else that has quantity and quality, can be infinite in actuality (*lā nihāya lahu bi-l-fiʿl*) and that infinity (*lā nihāya*) is only in potentiality. (*Œuvres* 29.6–7; *Rasāʾil* 1:114.10–11)

The argument then unfolds in four steps. Following a Euclidian form, it starts (*a*) with a series of six axioms or “first true immediately intelligible premises” (*muqaddimāt uwwal ḥaqqiyya maʿqūla bi-lā-tawassuṭ*), four of which Kindī will use in his subsequent argumentation (nos. 2, 3, 5, and 6; cf. Craig 1979, 27), like “[bodies] with an equal distance between their limits are equal in actuality and potentiality” (axiom 2) or “what has a limit is not infinite” (axiom 3) (*Œuvres* 29.10–11; *Rasāʾil* 1:114.13–14). Given these premises, and applying throughout the whole argument the method of reductio ad absurdum, al-Kindī ends up proving (*b*) that no magnitude can be infinite in actuality by showing the absurdities that will loom when one tries to apply ordinary arithmetic operations to magnitudes hypothetically infinite (Hasnawi 1992, 655). Having thus shown “that it is impossible for a body to be infinite” and therefore that no magnitude can be infinite in actuality, Kindī moves to (*c*) the third step of the argument:

> Since time is a quantity, it is impossible that there be an infinite time in actuality, considering that time has a finite beginning. Also, things attributed to a finite [body] are necessarily finite; therefore every attribute of a body, be it magnitude, place, movement, or time—which is divided (*mufaṣṣal*) by motion—and the sum total of all the attributes of the body in actuality, is also finite, since body is finite; hence the body of the universe is finite, as is every one of its attributes. (*Œuvres* 31.10–14; *Rasāʾil* 1:116.7–12)

The finiteness of time appears to be either a direct consequence of the proof of the finiteness of any magnitude, time itself being a magnitude, or an indirect consequence of the finiteness in extension of the universe, time being then finite as an attribute of the universe (Hasnawi 1992, 655). Hence, from the impossibility of the existence of any infinite magnitude in actuality al-Kindī concludes:

> Since this is necessary, it has been made clear that an infinite time in actuality cannot exist. Now time is the time of the body of the universe, I mean its extension (*muddatuhu*). If time is finite, the existence of the body is finite, since time is not an existent and there is no body without time, because time is the number of movement—I mean it is an extension measured by movement (*mudda taʿudduhā l-ḥaraka*). Therefore, if there is a movement, there is time, and if there is no movement, there is no time. (*Œuvres* 31.21–25; *Rasāʾil* 1:117.1–6)

In the background looms the famous Aristotelian formula of *Phys*. IV 12, 220b 14–16 and, as already noted by Jolivet (Jolivet 1993, 56–58), all the concepts at stake (time being a magnitude; time and movement being defined by each other; time being the number of the movement of the sphere of the fixed stars) are drawn from *Phys*. IV 10–14.

Having shown that body, time, and motion are coextensive and finite, Kindī still has to rule out a possibility (*d*): what if someone "thought that it is possible for the body of the universe (*jirm al-kull*) to have been at rest first, having the potentiality to move, and then to have moved?" In other words Kindī still had to examine whether a universe, which is assumed to have been originally at rest and then to have moved, can be said to be generated from nothing or be eternal (cf. *Phys*. VIII 1, esp. 250b 24, where the view of the body of the universe being first at rest was attributed by Aristotle to Anaxagoras though, as noted by Ivry 1974, 157–58, the two texts have different orientations). Having shown that movement is finite, Kindī still has to preclude the possibility of an infinite rest, which he does on the assumption that generation, understood here as the coming into existence out of nothing (*fa-in kāna kawnan ʿan lays fa-inna tahawwīhi aysan ʿan laysa*), "is one of the species of motion." Since body cannot have preceded its generation, then generation "is its essence," and hence the being of the body is not prior to movement. On the other hand if the universe was eternally at rest, motion could never arise, for motion is change and the eternal does not change, it simply is. Therefore it is self-contradictory to say that the universe is eternal and yet motion has a beginning. Kindī can now conclude:

> Thus, if there is movement, there is necessarily body, and if there is body, there is necessarily movement. But we already said that time does not precede movement;

> thus necessarily time does not precede body, since there is no time but with movement, and since there is no body but with movement and there is no movement but with a body, and no body without extension (*mudda*), given that extension is that in which there is existence (*huwiyya*), I mean that in which there is a certain existent (*huwa mā*). . . . Thus body, movement, and time do not precede each other. . . . Body does not precede time; thus it is impossible for the body of the universe (*jirm al-kull*) to be infinite as far as its existence (*inniyyatihi*) is concerned. The existence of the body of the universe is necessarily finite and hence it is impossible for the body of the universe to be eternal. (*Œuvres* 35.11–22; *Rasāʾil* 1:119.12–120.5)

Beyond the coextensivity of body, movement, and time, whose background might be *Phys*. IV 11, 219a 10–18 (see also *Quiddity, Œuvres*153.12–24; *Rasāʾil* 1:196.3–197.3 for the same argument in abbreviated form), the concept of extension looms large (Jolivet 1993, 57 and 62 ff.). Closely associated with *anniyya* and *huwiyya*, of which it is the correlate, *mudda* is the receptacle of anything that exists in the world and hence the sign of the finiteness of any existence here below. Being common to time and body, its centrality will be crucial for the demonstration of the spatial as well as temporal finiteness of the world, as will be confirmed in the next argument.

2.8.1.2. *Proof by Composition*

This proof, intended to show the finiteness of body, is based on the double composition of bodies, every body being composed (*murakkab*) of matter and form or substance and tridimensionality. But composition is a change (*tabaddul*) (affecting the state of noncomposition) and thus it is a movement. Without movement there is no body since body is composite. Hence body and motion do not precede each other but are coexistent.

Time and movement are likewise coexistent, because movement is a change and the change is "the number of the extension of what changes" (*al-tabaddul ʿadad muddat al-mutabaddil*). And time is an extension numbered by movement. Every body has an extension, meaning "that in which there is existence (*mā huwa fīhi inniyya*), I mean that in which there is a certain existent (*huwa mā*)" (*Œuvres* 37.8; *Rasāʾil* 1:120.17–18). But body does not precede movement, nor the extension numbered by movement, and hence body, movement, and time "are together as far as existence is concerned" (*fa-hiya maʿan fī l-anniyya*). As a result, time is finite in actuality since the existence of body is finite in actuality.

The whole argument rests on the assumption that composition is to be understood as a kind of change and hence a species of movement (*in kāna l-tarkīb wa-l-taʾlīf tabaddulan mā*) (for further developments see Davidson 1987, 111–13). This is even more clearly stated in *Oneness* (*Œuvres* 143.4; *Rasāʾil* 1:204.16: "Among the sorts of change (*tabaddul*) there are composition and assembling because it is the arrangement of things and their combination").

The proof of the finiteness of bodies as well as its corollary, the finiteness of time as an accident of body, are both intended to show the dependence of any created existence on the true and eternal One whose oneness and eternity is radically exclusive of any plurality and extension (Jolivet 1993, 64 n. 28).

While the second argument remains along the lines of the first one, aiming at reinforcing it in order "to increase, for those who examine that method, their expertise in engaging in it" (*Œuvres* 35. 23–24; *Rasāʾil* 1:120.5–6), Kindī tells us that the third and final argument against the infinity of the world is "of another sort": "Let us now make clear with another sort [of argument] (*nawʿ*) that time cannot be infinite in actuality neither in its past nor in its future" (*Œuvres* 37.14–15; *Rasāʾil* 1:121.3–4).

2.8.1.3a. *Argument for the Finiteness of Past Time*

The argument unfolds in two steps: (*a*) from the impossibility of an infinite series of past segments of time Kindī draws (*b*) the impossibility of traversing a temporal infinity in order to reach a given time and thus concludes that the present could never have been reached if an infinite past were to precede it. In other words, the present could never have been reached if infinite past time or an infinite series of past segments of time had to be traversed (Jolivet 1993, 64–65). But we reach a definite time (*al-intihāʾ ilā zaman maḥdūd mawjūd*); hence time does not proceed (*muqbilan*) from infinity but necessarily from a limit. The extension of the body is thus not infinite, and it is impossible that a body exists without extension. Therefore the existence of a body (*inniyyat al-jirm*) is not infinite, but the existence of a body is finite. Thus it is impossible for a body to be eternal. This argument, based on the impossibility to traverse the infinite, is also used by the Muʿtazilite theologian al-Naẓẓām (Wolfson 1976, 416–17; Davidson 1969, 375–76; Davidson 1987, 125).

2.8.1.3b. *Impossibility of an Infinite Series of Future Segments of Time*

Finally, after proving that past time cannot be infinite, Kindī had to complete the last step of his argument and prove that future time is not infinite either (*FPh* is the only one of the four treatises Kindī has devoted to the eternity of the world that addresses the question of the eternity *a parte post*). No matter what "definite time" might be added to the already accumulated finite past time, the total sum will remain finite.

The three arguments, intended to prove the finiteness of the world, entail de facto its creation or at least its beginning and hence the necessity of a first cause. Kindī had already established in the prologue the existence of a first Cause described as "the cause of time" (*ʿillat al-zamān*). However, he still needs to go through a long detour (chaps. 3 and 4) in order to establish that the "first true One" is the cause of the unity and the existence (*ʿillat al-tahawwī*) of all things, being one by essence, whereas "what is being brought into existence (*yuhawwā*) is not eternal."

Having thus proven that body, time, and motion are finite and having stated that "the body of the universe is a being coming to be from nonbeing" (*jirm al-kull kawn ʿan lays*) (*Œuvres* 33.24; *Rasāʾil* 1:119.4) whose "existence is necessarily finite" (*Œuvres* 35.22; *Rasāʾil* 1:120.3), Kindī needs now to rule out the possibility of anything, here below, being the cause of its own essence before addressing the issue of the unmoved cause of movement, as he has announced at the beginning of the second chapter (*Œuvres* 25.6–9; *Rasāʾil* 1:111.10–13):

> What is above natural [things] (*al-ṭabīʿiyyāt*) does not move, because it is impossible for a thing to be the cause of the coming to be of its essence, as we will show shortly. Hence, the cause of movement is not a movement, nor does the cause of what moves move: thus what is above natural things does not move.

2.9. Unity in the Sensible World (Chapter 3)

2.9.1. A Thing Cannot Be the Cause of Itself

The third chapter of *FPh* opens with the following inquiry, to which the first section is devoted: "Is it possible for a thing to be the cause of the coming-to-be of its essence (*ʿillat kawn dhātihi*), or is that impossible?" (*Œuvres* 41, 3–5) Kindī proceeds to explain immediately that he is using *kawn* in a specific and unusual sense, since his inquiry will include the possibility of a generation ex nihilo while generation is usually said to be out of something else:

> I mean by the coming-to-be (*kawn*) of its essence, its being brought into existence (*tahawwīhi*) out of something *or out of nothing*. Indeed—in other places—coming-to-be is said particularly of what comes-to-be *out of something*, because it is necessary for the thing either to be a being (*aysun*) and its essence a nonbeing (*laysun*), or to be a nonbeing and its essence a being; or to be a nonbeing and its essence a nonbeing; or to be a being and its essence a being. (*Œuvres* 41.5–8; *Rasāʾil* 1:123.3–6)

With this question he is paving the way not only for the conclusion of the chapter that will establish the necessity of a first Cause, which in turn will be the cause of the coming-to-be and the permanence of everything, but also for the last lines of the treatise that will infer from the noneternity of anything being-brought-into-existence (*yuhawwā*), its creation and hence the necessity of a creator.

In what follows, Kindī examines in each case the possibility for a thing to be the cause of its own essence, applying a reductio ad absurdum style of argument, in order to show the contradictions to which such an assumption will lead. He then concludes that in none of the cases that he lists can a thing be said to be the cause of its essence. One of the main threads of the argument is the radical distinction between the cause and its effect, and hence the impossibility for a thing to be the cause of its essence if it were to be identical with it, since the effect cannot be identical with its cause. Kindī does not specify further the nature of the distinction between the cause and its effect, though it constitutes the backbone of his argument, as the closing sentence of the chapter shows, echoing the prologue of the treatise:

> It has been made clear that all things have a first Cause that is not of the same genus, nor of the same figure, nor similar [to them] or participating in them. Rather it is loftier, nobler, and prior to them, and it is the cause of their coming-to-be and their permanence. (*Œuvres* 67.17–19; *Rasāʾil* 1:143.1–2)

In the meantime Kindī had shown that in everything unity and multiplicity are associated due to a cause that is "neither multiple nor is it multiple and one" because

> if it is multiple, then there would be unity in it, because multiplicity is nothing other than an aggregate of units. It would thus be a multiplicity and a unity at the same time, and hence the cause of multiplicity and unity would be unity and multiplicity and the thing would be the cause of its essence. But the cause is other than the effect, and hence the thing would be other than its essence, which is absurd and impossible. Thus the first Cause is neither multiple nor is it multiple and one. It thus remains that the cause is only one, with no multiplicity together with it in any way whatsoever. (*Œuvres* 67.19–24; *Rasāʾil* 1:143.4–8)

But in order to reach that conclusion, Kindī had to show that anything that is not essential in something, that is, anything that is accidental (*ʿāriḍ*), is an effect produced by something else in which it is essential.

2.9.2. Unity Is an Effect and an Accident in All Predicables and What They Are Said Of

Hence, in the second section of the chapter, and after having defined all the concepts he needed for his subsequent argument, we see Kindī examining "in how many ways 'one' (*wāḥid*) is said" (*Œuvres* 45.16; *Rasāʾil* 1:126.14), since "one" is said "of each one of the predicables (*maqūlāt*) and what comes to be from the predicables (*al-kāʾin min al-maqūlāt*) insofar as it is a genus, a species, an individual (*shakhṣ*), a specific difference, a proper, a common accident, an all, a part, a whole, a some" (*Œuvres* 47.12–14; *Rasāʾil* 1:128.4–6).

The inquiry is carried out upon each one of the universals listed by Kindī in order to investigate how "one" is said of each one of them. In each case the conclusion is invariably the same: in each one of the universals, unity is by convention (*bi-l-waḍʿ*) since they are all said of a multiplicity of a certain sort. Unity is thus said in a nonessential way (*min jihha lā dhātiyya*) of the universals, and does not belong to any of them in truth (*al-waḥda fīhi laysat bi-ḥaqīqiyya*); it is thus accidental, meaning "it is acquired from something else" (*mustafād min ghayrihi*). In other words, "It is acquired from a dispenser (*mufīd*), and it is an affection (*athar*)." Kindī then concludes:

> Furthermore, anything that is in something else accidentally is yet in another thing essentially because anything that is in something by accident is in something else by essence. Hence, since we have shown that unity is in all these [predicables] by

> accident, then it is in something else by essence and not by accident. Hence unity—in that in which unity is acquired by accident—comes from that in which it is by essence. Therefore, there is necessarily a true One (*wāḥid ḥaqq*) whose unity is not an affection. Let us clarify that more fully than what has been mentioned above. (*Œuvres* 53.10–15; *Rasāʾil* 1:132.8–14)

The first step of the argument concludes already with the necessary existence of a true One, in which unity is essential and is not an effect. That is a true One who dispenses unity in everything else in which unity is thus by accident.

Worth noting is the opposition "by accident" versus "by essence" that, next to the opposition "cause" versus "effect", is another thread articulating the whole argument. Here it is doubled up with the pair affection/effecter[6] (*muʾaththir*), which is also found in Kindī's *On the True Agent* (*Œuvres* 167–71; *Rasāʾil* 1:180–84). The emphasis is on the nature of the unity as an acquired character and thus not part of the essence of the thing.

The concepts are still Aristotelian, but they are already catering to a henology that starts being noticed with the apparition of a "true One in which unity is not an affection," who will thus be the cause of the unity that is an accident and an effect in the created things. Gerhard Endress has shown that the idea of unity as an "affection" of things, insofar as they participate in the true unity, is inspired by the Arabic version of Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, proposition 3, according to which the participated unity is an affection of what is, in itself, multiplicity (Endress 1973, 245; D'Ancona 1995b, 160). In fact, this idea will loom large in the conclusion of chapter 4, and by the same token of the first book of *FPh*. For now, Kindī is just paving the way for it and, as shown by D'Ancona, might be rather inspired by the Arabic version of proposition 2 (D'Ancona 1995b, 185–87). At any rate, it is definitely in the second part of chapter 3 that the influence of the Arabic Proclus is most significant.

2.9.3. Unity and Multiplicity Always Coexist in the Sensible World

In the third section of the chapter, and in order to "clarify" what he had just exposed, Kindī lists a series of arguments intended to prove that we cannot find in "all that is perceived by the senses and whose quiddity is grasped by the intellect" (*Œuvres* 53.16–17; *Rasāʾil* 1:132.15–16) multiplicity without unity (nine arguments) nor unity without multiplicity (nine arguments). That leads him, in the fourth and concluding section of the chapter, to establish the existence of a first Cause that is only one (*wāḥida faqaṭ*), and hence radically different from the sensible things (in which unity is always mixed) and the cause of their coming-to-be and their permanence.

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[6] In order to render the intended redundancy of the Arabic pair *athar*/*muʾaththir*, I follow here Jolivet and Rashed who specify that they take the word "effecteur" in its philosophical sense attested at the end of the 18th c. as meaning "efficient" (*Œuvres*, 46 n. 46), knowing however that the Latin *effector* (person who creates or causes) has been preserved in English as meaning an "effecter" i.e. "A person who or thing which brings about an event or result, accomplishes a purpose, etc. or a "maker, a creator " (OID).

All the arguments follow a similar pattern starting with the hypothetical premise of a multiplicity without unity (or vice versa, assuming a unity without multiplicity) from which is deduced, through a reductio ad absurdum, a conclusion that contradicts either the premise or the factual experience. The whole passage bears a strong Proclean influence (Endress 1973, 242–43; and, more strikingly, Jolivet 1979, who has shown that this series of dialectic arguments bears strong parallels with Proclus's *Platonic Theology*, though it is unclear how Kindī could have accessed the work of which no Arabic translation is known).

The argument culminates in the fourth and final section of the chapter that concludes with the result that unity and plurality coexist necessarily in the sensible world, where one is never found without the other.

> It has thus been shown from all these inquiries that it is impossible that there is multiplicity without unity in anything that we have mentioned, and from some of [these inquiries] that it is impossible that anything at all be unity without multiplicity. It has thus been made clear that it is impossible that there is unity only (*waḥda faqaṭ*), without multiplicity or multiplicity only, without unity. . . . It remains then that unity participates in multiplicity, that is, participates in it in all sensible things, and in what attaches to sensible things. That is to say, in whichever among them there is multiplicity there is unity and in whichever there is unity there is multiplicity. (*Œuvres* 63.17–65.3; *Rasāʾil* 1:140.10–141.3)

Kindī still has to show that the interdependence of unity and multiplicity in the sensible world requires "another cause, other than their essence, loftier, more noble than them, and prior to both of them, since the cause is by essence prior to the effect" (*Œuvres* 67.1–3; *Rasāʾil* 1:142.11–13). Now this cause is either one or multiple. If it is multiple it will have also unity, and thus unity and multiplicity will become the cause of unity and multiplicity, which is absurd. "Thus the first Cause is not multiple, nor is it multiple and one. It remains then that the cause is only one, with no multiplicity together with it in no way whatsoever" (*Œuvres* 67.23–24; *Rasāʾil* 1:143.7–8. For the Neoplatonic background of this passage see Endress 1973, 243–44, who shows the parallels with the Arabic version of prop. 5 of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*).

The chapter thus ends with the appearance of a first transcendent Cause that is not yet identified with God or the Creator. Kindī still has to show "in which way unity exists in the things that are caused (*al-maʿlūlāt*), what is true unity, and what is unity metaphorically and not in truth" (*Œuvres* 69.3–5; *Rasāʾil* 1:143.10–12), hence introducing the program of the fourth and last chapter of what has reached us from *On First Philosophy*.

2.10. The True One and the One Creator (Chapter 4)

"Let us now say in which way unity exists in the predicables (*al-maqūlāt*), what is one in truth and what is one metaphorically and not in truth" (*Œuvres* 71.3–4; *Rasāʾil* 1:143.14–15). The opening sentence of chapter 4[7] echoes the closing sentence of chapter 3, in such a striking way that the reader might very well miss the slight differences between both sentences that may turn out to be more significant than it appears at first sight (see also Ivry 1974, 179): (1) *al-maʿlūlāt* (things that are caused) is replaced by *al-maqūlāt* (predicables), hence paving the way for the conclusion of the chapter where all the intelligibles (*al-maʿqūlāt*) are denied from the One. The predicables are all universals and thus intelligibles. (2) There is a terminological shift from "unity" to "one" that reflects the progression of the inquiry: while chapter 3 examined all the ways unity is in sensible things, chapter 4 tries to specify in which way "one" can apply to God and hence what is the nature of the true one, in other words what can be truly said to be One. (3) The dichotomy "one metaphorically" versus "one in truth" appears for the first time and does not overlap completely with the pair "accidentally one" versus "essentially one" as we will shortly see.

Kindī introduces in the first section a discussion in an attempt to rule out, through a series of obscure arguments, any possibility of "one" being a number and hence being a quantity to which will apply any of the predicates that apply to quantity like equal and unequal or divisibility and nondivisibility. Incidentally, and as we will see below, these pages reveal a theory of number that would be worth further investigation, though that clearly exceeds the scope of this chapter.

2.10.1. One Is Not a Number

Indeed, "Most distinctive of a quantity is its being called both equal and unequal" (*Cat.* 6, 6a 26–27). Hence, according to Kindī, one, if a number and thus a quantity, would be divisible into numerous ones, some of which are equal to it and some not (as noted by Ivry 1974, 181, al-Kindī obviously understands the statement as meaning that the one itself would have to possess equal and unequal parts). But one is indivisible by definition. There is thus an obvious contradiction and thus one is not a number (*Œuvres* 73.19–75.1; *Rasāʾil* 1:146.18–147.5). By the same token, Kindī reminds us not to confuse the one with the matter that is unified by the one, or to say it differently, not to confuse what we count with what we count with. A class of material things "is composed of numerable things not of number" (*maʿdūdāt lā ʿadad*). Thus, "When we say 'five horses,' the horses are numbered by the five, which is a number with no matter; matter is only in the horses" (*Œuvres* 75.3–5; *Rasāʾil* 1:147.8–9). In other words, Kindī seems to think of numbers as "abstractions from groups made up of pure units which are abstraction from physical objects" (see *Phys.* 219b 5–7 and Annas 1976, 34) and hence "We must not confuse the one with that which is rendered a single thing by the one" (Marmura and Rist 1963, 342). Therefore when we say "one," we mean "unity itself and unity is not divisible at all" (*Œuvres* 75.5–6; *Rasāʾil* 1:147, 10). One is thus not a number but the *measure* of number or, in other words, the *unit* of counting. As such it is also indivisible, since the unit "is what is taken to be indivisible for the purpose of counting." Not being a number, "one" does not fall under the category of quantity "but under another category." Without further specification, Kindī concludes:

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[7] For a discussion of this chapter see Marmura and Rist 1963 and Adamson 2007a, chap. 3.

> Thus "one" is not a number by nature, but equivocally (*bi-ishtibāh al-ism*), since numbers are not said except in relation to one thing: [just as] medical things [are said so] in relation to medicine and healthy things in relation to health. (*Œuvres* 75.9–11; *Rasāʾil* 1:147.14–16)

Before telling us what he means by such a definition, which reminds us of *Metaph.* IV.2, 1003a33 ff., and the many "senses in which a thing may be said to 'be,' but they are all related to one central point" (tr. Barnes 1984), Kindī still has to explore, in a sort of interpolation that interrupts the flow of the argument, further contradictions to which we will be led if we were to consider one as a number and hence as a quantity to which will apply equality and inequality, odd or even (*Œuvres* 75.12–77.14; *Rasāʾil* 1:147.17–149.5).

Kindī seems to have reached a dead end. He thus needs to resume and complete his argument:

> Since it has not yet been made manifest through this inquiry that one is necessarily not a number, we thus say: the element (*rukn*) of a thing, from which the thing is constructed—I mean of which the thing is composed—is not the thing itself. Like the articulate sounds of which a sentence is composed: as such they are not the sentence because a sentence "is a composite conventional sound, signifying something with [the addition of] time," whereas the letter is a natural incomposite sound. Hence if number is composed of units, as everybody agrees, then one is the element (*rukn*) of number and not itself a number. (*Œuvres*, 77, 15–20; *Rasāʾil* 1:149.6–11)

As already noted by Jolivet (*Œuvres*, 76 n. 62), this formula combines the Aristotelian definitions of sentence and verb in *De Int.* 4, 16b 26–27 and 3, 16b 6. More significantly it bears some similarities with *Metaph.* XIV.1, where Aristotle states that "one" is "some underlying thing with a distinct nature of its own" (1087b 33) and it is a "principle" (cf. also *Metaph.* V.6, 1016b18 ff.). Such a statement should be read in light of *Metaph.* X.1–2, where we find a fuller discussion of Aristotle's theory of "one" as not being a number but the measure of number. As noted by J. Annas (1976, 36), Aristotle stresses the analogy of the unit of counting to the unit of measurement, "For measure is that by which quantity is known; and quantity *qua* quantity is known either by a 'one' or by a number, and all number is known by a 'one.' Therefore all quantity *qua* quantity is known by the one, and that by which quantities are primarily known is the one itself; and so the one is the *starting-point* of number *qua* number" (1052b 20–25, tr. Barnes 1984). The parallelism brings out also a further point: "The measure is always homogeneous with the thing measured" (1053a 24), like the articulate sounds of which a sentence is composed, in the example provided by Kindī. "Likewise it is not necessary that one—because it is the admitted principle/element of number—be a number. Rather because number is composed of units, it [sc. number] is units" (*Œuvres* 79.13–15; *Rasāʾil* 1:150.15–16).

Consequently, Kindī can define number as "the arrangement of units (*naẓm al-waḥdāniyyāt*), the collection of units and the combination of units (*Œuvres* 79.21–22; *Rasāʾil* 1:151.1), this way echoing Aristotle's definition of number as "a plurality of units" (*Metaph.* X.1, 1053a30).

Having shown that one is not a number, Kindī concludes this first section by coming full circle (*Œuvres* 81–83; *Rasāʾil* 1:151–52): the section had opened with preliminary remarks stating that none of the predicates that are applied to quantities, like large and small, long and short, or many and few can be predicated in an absolute way; they are always said in relation to something, for nothing is said to be large or small just in itself, but by reference to something else. Kindī now closes with the very same remark, but expanding on his original statement in order to explain here what he means by "relation":

> Given that none of large and small, long and short, many and few are said in an absolute way, but they are said in relation (*bi-l-iḍāfa*), each one of them is only related to something else of the same genus, not of another genus. Like, for example, magnitude: if it is a body it can then only be related to another body, not to a surface and not to a line, or to a place, or to time, or to a number or to a statement. (*Œuvres* 81. 3–7; *Rasāʾil* 1:151.8–12)

We can compare bodies with bodies, surfaces with surfaces, time with time, but one cannot say, while talking correctly, that a body is longer than a surface. To number, it being a discrete quantity, the same will apply. Kindī therefore concludes, without any other form of transition, that the One in truth (*al-wāḥid bi-l-ḥaqīqa*) is not susceptible to be in relation to something of the same genus, and not even to have a genus in the first place. "Hence the true One (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*) has no genus at all. And we have said above that what has a genus is not eternal and that what is eternal has no genus. Thus the true One is eternal and does never multiply at all, in no species whatsoever" (*Œuvres* 83.8–10; *Rasāʾil* 1:153.2–4).

The statement echoes the description of the eternal at the beginning of chapter 2 (see *Rasāʾil* 1:113, 1 ff.; *Œuvres* 27, 7 ff.), which now takes its full meaning as we see it here being applied directly to the true One. A description of the nature of the true One that mirrors every aspect of the description of the nature of the eternal in chapter 2 follows immediately.

2.10.2. The True One Is Not Said of Any of the Things of Which One Is Said

> [The true One] is not said "one" in relation to something else, since it has neither matter through which it would be divided, nor form composed of genus and species—for what is like this multiplies through what it has been composed of—nor is it a quantity at all, nor does it have a quantity, because what is like this is also divisible, for every quantity, or everything that has a quantity, is subject to increase and decrease. What is subject to decrease is divisible and what is divisible multiplies in a certain way.
>
> It has been said that multiplicity is in every one of the categories and in what attaches to it in terms of genus, species, individual, specific difference, property, common accident, all, part, and whole. Likewise "one" is said of every one of these[8] and therefore, the true One is none of these. (*Œuvres* 83.10–18; *Rasāʾil* 1:153.4–12)

The second section of the chapter thus reviews all aspects of reality that are said "one" but of which the true One cannot be said, because the unity they encompass is always mixed with a certain multiplicity. This is a theme we have already met in chapter 3.

Having enumerated all the ways "one" is said, Kindī recapitulates the whole discussion, following closely, but not entirely, *Metaph*. V.6 (*Œuvres* 93.4–95.1; *Rasāʾil* 1:159.3–160.3 and 1015b 16–1017a 5). In the course of the discussion he mentions, among the things that are called essentially one "because their substance is one," those that are analogically one because "they are related to one [thing] (*nisbatuhā wāḥidun*), like the medical things that are all related to medicine" (*Œuvres* 93.15–16 and 1016b 7), thus echoing the definition he had given above of the "one" being a number only equivocally since numbers are said in relation to one thing: "like medical things are said so in relation to medicine and everything which is healthy is related to health." At stake is the kind of unity that happens through the relation to one and the same reality. The same kind of unity attaches to the different modes of being, in relation to substance (see *Metaph*. IV.2, 1003b 1–3, where the same examples are used), knowing that Aristotle has frequently asserted that "one" has as many senses as "is."

Kindī seems to have that in mind when closing this section: "It is evident that existence (*huwiyya*) is said of every thing whose cause is the 'one.' Existence is thus said of what is enumerated by the species of the 'one' " (*Œuvres* 95.1–2; *Rasāʾil* 1:160.4–5). Here he is also paving the way for the conclusion of the chapter, where the true One is said to provide beings with existence by providing them with unity.

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[8] Reading *hādhihi* instead of *baʿdihi*, as suggested by Ivry 1974, 105 n. 1, followed by Adamson and Pormann 2012, 86 n. 90, by contrast with *Rasāʾil* 1:153.11, who mentions that the manuscript has no diacritical points, and *Œuvres* 83.17.

2.10.3. True One above and beyond Any Description

The chapter culminates in what looks strikingly like a piece of negative theology denying from the true One any attribute at all. The absolute unity and simplicity of the true One precludes any description of its nature.

> It has thus been shown that the true One is none of the intelligibles: neither matter, nor genus, nor species, nor individual, nor specific difference, nor property, nor common accident, nor movement, nor soul, nor intellect, nor all, nor part, nor whole, nor some, nor one in relation to something else. Rather it is absolutely one and does not admit of multiplicity. It is not composed of multiple [things] either. . . . The true One has thus neither matter, nor form, nor quantity, nor quality, nor relation, nor is it described by any of the other intelligibles: it has neither genus, nor specific difference, nor individual, nor property, nor common accident. It does not move and is not described by any of the things that are denied to be one in truth. It is thus pure unity only (*waḥda faqaṭ maḥḍ*), I mean nothing else than unity, and every "one," other than it, is multiple. (*Œuvres* 95.3–14; *Rasāʾil* 1:160.6–17)

This passage seems to reflect two different traditions. On the one hand, it has been read against the background of the *Plotiniana Arabica*, of which several texts explain the absolute simplicity of the One as an exclusion of any other attribute (*ṣifa*). The first Cause is "above the attributes because it is the cause of the attributes" (D'Ancona 1995a, 139 and n. 74). The *Liber de Causis* particularly bears some striking similarities in terms of terminology as well as content with *FPh* (D'Ancona 1995b, 170ff.). On the other, it has been compared with the theological *tawḥīd* of the *mutakallimūn* and particularly the Muʿtazila as transmitted in Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī's *Maqālāt* (Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 155–56 and 483, quoted by *Œuvres* 109 n. 82).

However, the impossibility of any description of the true One and its necessary corollary, namely its absolute transcendence, did not prevent Kindī from considering the true One as the cause of unity and by the same token of the existence of all things, hence exposing himself to the criticism that will be addressed to him by Ibn Ḥazm. Indeed, the true One is the only One by essence. Therefore, unity, because it is an accident in all the things, is not only radically different from the true One but also requires a first Cause of unity in order to avoid a regression ad infinitum "since it is impossible that things be actually infinite" (*Œuvres* 95.22).

> Therefore, the first cause of unity in things made one (*al-muwaḥḥadāt*) is the true One, who did not acquire unity from something else because it is impossible that things dispensing [unity] to each other be actually infinite at the beginning. Hence the cause of unity in the things made one is the first true One and everything that receives unity is caused (*maʿlūl*). Each "one," other than the One in truth, is one metaphorically and not truly (*al-wāḥid bi-l-majāz lā bi-l-ḥaqīqa*). Therefore each one of the effects of unity (*maʿlūlāt li-l-waḥda*) goes from its unity to its nonexistence (*ghayr huwiyyatihi*); I mean that it does not become multiple insofar as it exists, but it is multiple and not absolute one, that is absolutely one that does not multiply at

> all and whose unity is nothing else than its existence. (*Œuvres* 95.22–97.3; *Rasāʾil* 1:161.8–14)

This difficult passage marks the beginning of the conclusion toward which the whole treatise, or rather the whole first part of *FPh*, was aiming. Kindī brings in the different theses he has developed in the previous chapters in as many steps toward this final conclusion, in which Neoplatonic concepts overlap with the demands of Muslim theology, giving room to a complex and original synthesis. It had already been shown that unity and multiplicity were inseparable in all sensible things, and Kindī had already hinted at the end of chapter 3 that the cause of the association of unity and multiplicity should be a different "loftier and nobler" cause that would be pure unity. We now learn that such a cause is the first true and almost ineffable One, whose unity is not acquired from anything else by virtue of the principle of the impossibility of a regression ad infinitum in the past as has been demonstrated in chapter 2. Everything else that receives unity is thus caused and called "one" metaphorically.

2.10.4. One in Truth versus One Metaphorically

It has been already noticed (Adamson 2007a, 53) that the fourth chapter shifts from the opposition between what is "essentially one" and what is "accidentally one," to the opposition between the "one in truth" (*al-wāḥid bi-l-ḥaqq*) and "the one metaphorically" (*al-wāḥid bi-l-majāz*) already introduced in the first lines of the chapter but looming more largely in the conclusion (*Œuvres* 71.2; 95.26; 99.1; *Rasāʾil* 1:143.15; 161.11; 162.14). The meaning, however, is not the same. What is metaphorically one is not only "what is both one and many." It is what receives its unity from the true One, and hence from God, as Kindī explains in the last lines of the chapter:

> Since what we intended to clarify in terms of distinction between the things that are one (*wāḥidāt*) has been shown, so that the One in truth, Dispenser, Creator, Almighty Supporter, becomes manifest, as well as what are the things that are one metaphorically, I mean *having acquired [unity] from the true One*, exalted is He above the attributes of the heretics. (*Œuvres* 97.20–99.1; *Rasāʾil* 1:162.13–15)

Every "one" that is not the true One is thus an effect produced by the first Cause. What is being emphasized here is the ontological inferiority of the "metaphorically one" that is granted unity and by the same token existence from the true One. In other words, the "metaphorically one" is not only what is always associated with multiplicity, it is what depends, for its unity and hence its existence, on the true One. Compare with *On the True Agent*, where Kindī contrasts the true Agent who is not acted upon and is the Creator and the Agent of the universe to "what is below Him, that is, all His creatures, which are called agents metaphorically and not in truth, I mean they are acted upon in truth" (*Œuvres* 169.13–14; *Rasāʾil* 1:183.9–10). Beyond the distinction between what acts without being acted upon and what acts and is acted upon, here as in *FPh*, what is in truth is in the first place what is proper to God, as opposed to what is "below Him" and is created by Him and hence can be an agent only metaphorically because in reality it is acted upon. In both instances, *ḥaqīqa* refers to reality, whereas *majāz* refers to a derivative reality (see Heinrichs 1984, 136; Gannagé 2015).

2.10.5. One, Being, and Creation

Unity in the sensible things is thus acquired from the true One and is therefore an affection (*athar*) and an accident in what is essentially multiple. Such a thesis is inspired by the Arabic version of proposition 3 of Proclus's *Elements of Theology* (Endress 1973, 244–45, who also mentions an influence of prop. 2). Furthermore, D'Ancona has shown that the same formulation occurs in the conclusion of the *Liber de Causis* and that the emphasis on the "acquired" nature of unity in the sensible things stems from the Arabic version/adaptation of proposition 3 rather than from the original Greek text (D'Ancona 1995b, 160 ff., for a thorough analysis of the relationship between *FPh*, the Arabic version of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, prop. 3, and the conclusion of the *Liber de Causis*). This idea is one of the main points of the conclusion of *FPh*: the true One is that which dispenses unity to everything else without having acquired it from something else. Being pure unity that is never affected by any kind of multiplicity, it is thus the cause of what is essentially multiple and contingent.

Still another idea is looming here: unity is the condition of existence in all sensible things, in such a way that what loses its unity loses its existence, as the passage mentioned above has concluded (Jolivet 1979, 72, established a parallel between this passage and Proclus's *Platonic Theology* II 1; cf. also Endress 1973, 244–45; D'Ancona 1995b, 159). The true One is not only a principle of unity but also a principle of being. In other words the true One makes things exist by making them one (Adamson 2007a, 56). Indeed, a few lines above, Kindī had specified that in the true One and first Cause "unity is nothing else than existence (*huwiyya*)." He now carries the idea a step further: being "pure being," the first One brings things to existence "through His own existence."

> Every being-brought-into-existence (*tahawwin*) is thus only a being-acted-upon (*infiʿāl*) that brings into existence what was not. The emanation (*fayḍ*) of unity from the first true One is thus the being-brought-into-existence (*tahawwī*) of every sensible thing and of everything that attaches to the sensible. Each one of them exists when [the first true One] brings-it-into-existence *through His own existence*. (*Œuvres* 97.8–10; *Rasāʾil* 1:162.1–3)

In fact, both ideas are correlative and belong to the same doctrinal complex, namely that of the *Plotiniana Arabica*. One of the main characteristics of this group of texts is a conception of the true One as “pure being” that departs from Plotinus as well as Proclus (D’Ancona 1995a, 124ff., esp. 144). Such an idea originates in the denial of any attribute to the true One, which is thus reduced to “being only” (*al-inniyya faqaṭ*). It is explicitly stated, in passages of the *Theology of Aristotle* with no equivalent in Plotinus, that the first Cause creates “through its being only (*bi-anniyatihi faqaṭ*)” (cf. Badawi 1977, 161, 6–9, quoted by d’Ancona 1995a, 144 n. 95).

The same implications are to be found in Kindī’s conception of creation, in the closing lines of the chapter, where the true One is finally identified with the Creator. Yet the religious concept of creation is still expressed in philosophical terms, even though the true One and first Cause receives some of the beautiful names of God.

> The cause of the being-brought-into-existence is thus from the true One who does not acquire unity from any dispenser, but is by essence one, whereas what is being-brought-into-existence (*yuhawwā*) is not eternal, and what is not eternal is created (*mubdaʿ*), meaning its being-brought-into-existence (*tahawwīhi*) is due to a cause. Thus what is being-brought-into-existence is created, and since the cause of the bringing-into-existence is the first true One, hence the cause of the creation is the first true One. The cause from which is the beginning of movement—I mean the mover—, is the agent. Hence, since the first true One is the cause of the beginning of the movement of being-brought-into-existence (*tahawwī*), that is of being-acted-upon (*al-infiʿāl*), it is then the Creator of all things being-brought-into-existence (*jamīʿ al-mutahawwiyyāt*). Since there is no existence except through the unity it contains, and since their being-made-one (*tawaḥḥuduhā*) is their being-brought-into-existence (*tahawwīhā*), it is thus through unity that the all (i.e., the universe) subsists (*fa-bi-l-waḥda qiwām al-kull*), and if the things being-brought-into-existence departed from unity, they would flow and pass away (*ghāra wa-dabara*) simultaneously with the departure, in no time. (*Œuvres* 97.10–18; *Rasāʾil* 1:162.3–12)

In the passage at stake the true One is said to be the “cause of the *beginning* of the movement of being-brought-into-existence,” not of the movement itself. That seems a way to preserve the transcendence of the Creator and true One who initiates the movement without being affected by its laws. Bestower of being and unity, the true One creates, structures, and supports, through his oneness, a world to which He does not belong. Such is the conclusion of *FPh*, which does not tell us how God exercises causality over his creation. The few fragments of the missing portions of *FPh*, collected by Rashed and Jolivet (see *Œuvres* 113–33), hint to such a discussion, though they are too scarce to draw any conclusion. The issue is addressed in other treatises. For instance, in the prologue of his treatise *On the Proximate Efficient Cause* (*Rasāʾil* 1:215–16), al-Kindī indicates that he has addressed the topic of the eternity, the unity, and the oneness of God in *FPh*. Having thus already explained the remote efficient first cause that is God, he now turns to the proximate efficient cause, that is, the heavenly bodies, in order to explain the unity of God through His activity, namely the organization of the universe.

2.11. Conclusion

The fourth chapter, and by the same token the first and only part of the treatise that has reached us, ends on an emphatic note:

> Since what we intended to clarify in terms of distinction between the things that are one (*al-wāḥidāt*) has been shown, so that the One in truth, Dispenser, Creator, Almighty Supporter becomes manifest, as well as what are the things that are one metaphorically, I mean having acquired [unity] from the true One, exalted is He above the attributes of the heretics, let us now complete this section and follow it up with what naturally comes after, with the support of He who has complete omnipotence, perfect power, and overflowing generosity. (*Œuvres* 97.20–99.3; *Rasāʾil* 1:162.13–16)

These few lines and the passage they close (reproduced above) echo the prologue of the treatise, which has opened with the existence of a "true One, cause of all truth," now identified with the One, Creator and Providential God of the revealed religion. Al-Kindī thus comes full circle, closing a tightly knit analysis that deduces from the finiteness of the sensible world the existence of a Creator and the generation ex nihilo of the world (see Elamrani Jamal 1989, 656). In between, four chapters and an argument finely woven out of different doctrinal and philosophical traditions that are all reflected in this conclusion: while the notions of emanation, dispensation, and efficient causality of a first Cause reflect the *Neoplatonica arabica* that make room for a true One and pure Being creating through its being only, the concepts of movement, existence, and time hint to the Aristotelian conceptual framework that remained at work throughout the treatise alongside the Neoplatonic inspiration. Finally the dichotomy *majāz* versus *ḥaqīqa*, as well as the very last words accusing of heresy those who ascribe attributes to God, alludes to a Muʿtazilī background, for which the *tanzīh* is a direct consequence of the *tawḥīd* (Jolivet 1971, 109).

Al-Kindī's eclecticism, including his integration of theological questions within the fabric of rational philosophy, has been enough highlighted by the scholarship and does not need further emphasis.

Therefore, in closing I would like to address quickly the issue of the influence of *FPh* and the legacy of al-Kindī within the Arabic philosophical tradition. Ironically, the only substantial and straightforward trace of *FPh* in later philosophical work is a negative one. Almost two centuries after al-Kindī's death, the Andalusian scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) wrote a refutation of *FPh*, addressing particularly the issue of the characterization of God as a cause, in which he reproduces large fragments of the text, including excerpts of parts that are no longer extant (see Daiber 1986a and 1986b). A further fragment, referring to "section 9" of *FPh*, has been transmitted, also in al-Andalus, by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andalusī (see *Œuvres* 129–31). A refutation written by Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī in order to answer objections leveled by al-Kindī against the Christian dogma of the Trinity reproduces a thesis attributed to al-Kindī that might be extracted from an otherwise unknown short treatise, a "Refutation of the Christians and abolition of their Trinity on the basis of logic and philosophy," of which we have no other traces. The theses attributed by Yaḥyā to al-Kindī are along the same lines as chapter 4 of *FPh* and use the five "voices" of Porphyry's *Isagoge* (see *Œuvres* 119–27). Finally a short fragment from the *Muntakhab Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma* of Abū Sulayman al-Sijistānī, concerning the knowledge of particulars God has (*Œuvres* 133), to which one can add another small excerpt in al-Tawḥīdī's *K. al-Imtāʿ* (see *Imtāʿ*, 3:133), completes this overall meager picture of the direct impact of *FPh* on the philosophical tradition.

This being said, Peter Adamson has drawn the contours and main features of a more significant "Kindian tradition" that engages directly with al-Kindī's own work and that he identified as "a significant force in the intellectual milieu for about two centuries following al-Kindī's death" (Adamson 2007a, 12–20 and 2007b). Among its main figures are Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 934) and Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī (d. 899), of whom unfortunately no work has reached us, but also Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī (d. 992) and Isaac Israeli (d. ca. 907) (see Rowson 1988 and Altmann and Stern 2009).

What remains to be done is to trace the influence of al-Kindī on the major Aristotelian philosophical tradition represented by figures such al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes. The scholarship has so far contrasted al-Kindī with this trend, though as noted by Adamson (2007a, 12) they are all heirs to a tradition he has inaugurated, namely the integration of Greek philosophy into the formation of a genuine Arabic philosophical thought. His eclecticism and more so his engagement with Muslim theology, while at the same time conferring to his philosophy a real originality, have contributed to set him aside from the other major figures of Islamic philosophy. Still, he has addressed issues that were later on taken over and developed by this tradition, even if in an opposite direction, like, for example, the question of the creation of the world or the oneness of the first principle. Trying to unearth his influence, even when his name is not mentioned, will contribute to reintegrate him as part of a tradition he has initiated and that might bear his imprint more than has been so far acknowledged.

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CHAPTER 3

ABŪ BAKR AL-RĀZĪ (D. 925), *THE SPIRITUAL MEDICINE*

PETER ADAMSON

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyāʾ al-Rāzī (251/865–313/925) is known above all for three things. First and foremost, his work as a doctor. Like Avicenna, he was well known both in Arabic and in Latin medical literature (in Latin he was known as "Rhazes"). His medical writings were somewhat less influential than those of Avicenna, especially the *Canon*. But al-Rāzī was a far more original and experienced clinician than Avicenna. It has been seriously questioned whether Avicenna even practiced medicine, as opposed to just writing about it. (For a defense of Avicenna having practiced to some extent, see Pormann 2013.) No one could have the same doubt about al-Rāzī. We are told that he directed hospitals in both his native Rayy and in Baghdad. He not only wrote lengthy overviews of medicine from a broadly Galenic point of view, but also collected his own observations of patients and how they responded to treatment. These observations, along with notes on Arabic versions of texts by Galen, Hippocrates, and other authors, are gathered into a text called *al-Ḥāwī*, or *The Comprehensive Book*. It is aptly named, filling no fewer than twenty-three volumes in a modern printed edition. He also wrote texts on more specific medical topics, including a groundbreaking treatise on differential diagnosis.

Al-Rāzī's second claim to fame is his philosophical theory of the "five eternals." With this theory, he explained how the cosmos derives from five principles: God, soul, matter, time, and place. Unlike al-Rāzī's medical output, which is extensively preserved, his writings about the five eternals are lost. The theory is therefore known to us solely through the reports of contemporaries and later authors. Our witnesses are usually hostile, and mention al-Rāzī only in order to refute him. It is easy to see why the theory provoked not just opposition but outright scorn. Al-Rāzī would seem to be putting four other principles on a par with God, by recognizing them all as eternal. His cosmology has God creating the cosmos from eternally preexisting matter, which consists of atoms. Place and time must be eternal, since without them there would be nowhere for the cosmos to be, and no moment at which the cosmos could start existing. Soul too must preexist the cosmos, since according to al-Rāzī, God would never have created our universe if left to His own devices. The cosmos we see around us is full of suffering, and cannot derive only from a wise and merciful deity. It must instead be the product of the soul's foolish choice to involve itself with matter.

The third famous aspect of al-Rāzī's intellectual life is his critical stance on prophecy. Again, for our knowledge of these remarks we rely on his critics, first and foremost Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, another man from the city of Rayy (hence both are called "al-Rāzī"). His *Proofs of Prophecy* (Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī 2011) refutes a book about prophecy by our al-Rāzī. Abū Ḥātim also recounts face-to-face encounters in which al-Rāzī expounded his views on both the five eternals and prophecy. According to Abū Ḥātim, al-Rāzī (referred to here as "the heretic") decried supposed prophets as charlatans, who use tricks to persuade gullible religious believers that they can perform miracles. Al-Rāzī again invokes God's mercy and wisdom, insisting that He would never set factions against one another by giving them different leaders (*imāms*) with different revelations. There is room for doubt as to whether al-Rāzī's position is being accurately represented by Abū Ḥātim. Other evidence shows that he engaged carefully with theologians over the meaning of the Qurʾān, and in fact insisted that it agreed with his five eternals theory (Rashed 2008). But a number of figures apart from Abū Ḥātim, several of them Ismāʿīlīs like he was, agree that al-Rāzī was a heretical critic of Islam, and of revealed religion more generally (Stroumsa 1999; Vallat 2016).

None of these three aspects of al-Rāzī's thought—his medicine, his five eternals theory, or his critique of prophecy—is obviously on show in his longest surviving philosophical work, *The Spiritual Medicine* (*al-Ṭibb al-rūḥānī*; cited as *SM*, page numbers from al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*). At first glance it seems instead to be a rather conventional treatise on ethics. In the course of *The Spiritual Medicine*, we are lectured about the dangers of drink, advised on how to wean ourselves of envy and grief, and even told to stop fidgeting. Memorable anecdotes, quotations of poetry, and cautionary tales complete the picture of a work that belongs more in the self-help section of a bookshop than the shelves of a philosopher's library. Yet, underlying the popular and occasionally hectoring tone is a sophisticated moral psychology, which does on closer inspection relate to the rest of al-Rāzī's thought.

The most obvious connection is to his career as a doctor, as we can see from the very title of the work. As al-Rāzī explains in a prologue (*SM* 15; for translations see Arberry 1950 and Brague 2003), it is intended as a companion volume to a medical work entitled *Kitāb al-Manṣūrī*, or *Book for Manṣūr* (al-Rāzī 1987). The title refers to the dedicatee, the Samanid prince al-Manṣūr b. Ismāʿīl. The *Book for Manṣūr* provides a detailed exposition of medical knowledge, with a sizable introduction followed by discussions of bodily temperament or "mixture" (*mizāj*), nutrition, the maintenance of health, and so on for hundreds of pages that discuss everything from hair problems to the setting of fractures. As wide ranging as the *Book for Manṣūr* is, though, it covers only one type of medicine: medicine for the body (*al-ṭibb al-jismānī*). The *Spiritual Medicine* completes the project by dealing with the other type of medicine: medicine for the soul.

The relation of the *Spiritual Medicine* to the rest of al-Rāzī's philosophy is less evident. I will return to that question at the end of this chapter (section 3.6). First, I will (section 3.1) provide some context by considering the Galenic background of the idea that there is a "medicine for the soul." As we will see, al-Rāzī is not the only author in the Arabic tradition to make use of this idea. I will then (section 3.2) turn to the central theme of the *Spiritual Medicine*, namely the place of reason in the well-lived human life. This will be followed by (section 3.3) an examination of the most often discussed issue regarding the *Spiritual Medicine*, namely al-Rāzī's attitude toward the place of pleasure in the good life. That in turn will lead us to (section 3.4) a consideration of the limited aims of the work, which is intended only to help us tame and condition our lower souls, without necessarily achieving the well-grounded beliefs and superior values of the true philosopher. In light of this we will be able (section 3.5) to come to a better understanding of the relationship between the *Spiritual Medicine* and al-Rāzī's other surviving work on ethics, the *Philosophical Life* (*al-Sīra al-falsafiyya*).

3.1. Medicine for Souls

The notions that the philosopher is a "doctor of the soul," and that souls can become ill and require medical treatment just as bodies do, were widespread in antiquity (Pigeaud 1981). But Arabic ethical literature draws on one main Hellenic source for this theme: Galen. He draws the parallel in two ethical works that were transmitted into Arabic, entitled *On the Affections of the Soul* (Galen 1819–33, 5:1–57, trans. Galen 1997, 100–127) and *On Character Traits* (Kraus 1937, trans. Mattock 1972; cf. further Walzer 1949). At the beginning of *On the Affections of the Soul* Galen says himself that many philosophers, such as Chrysippus, have written on *therapeia* of the soul (Galen, *Affections*, 3). He carries on this tradition by defending a Stoic ethical ideal on the basis of Platonist psychology. We should, as the Stoics taught, learn to follow reason rather than "affections" (*pathē*), which give rise to "irrational impulses" (Galen, *Affections*, 7), and which may be understood as diseases of the soul (*nosēma psuchēs*, at *Affections*, 24).

Galen, however, rejects the Stoic doctrine that the human soul is rational through and through, and that affections like anger or fear can be understood as false beliefs. Instead, he invokes the Platonic conception of a soul with three powers or aspects (often called simply three "souls"; at *Traits*, 26, Galen characteristically says that we should not be fussy about the terminology). Only the highest of these three is capable of reason, and it alone is susceptible to "education" (Galen, *Traits*, 42). The lower souls are those that are shared with nonhuman animals, namely the spirited and desiring souls. Affections arise from these two parts, and are to be distinguished from failures of reasoning, which Galen instead designates as "errors (*hamartēmata*) that arise through false belief" (Galen, *Affections*, 7, cf. *Traits*, 30). Many, if not all, of our "character traits" (*akhlāq*) are seated in the lower souls (*Traits*, 25–26). These traits arise through inborn natural tendency or through habituation (*Traits*, 30–31), and must be combated by positive habituation or training, which will weaken or "tame" the lower souls to the point that they can be dominated by reason. For Galen, this is what it means to impose "health" on a soul.

A number of early Arabic texts can be grouped under the heading of "Galenic ethics" (see Strohmaier 2003; Adamson, forthcoming). We already find the first Hellenizing philosopher to write in Arabic, al-Kindī, composing a work called *On Dispelling Sadness*, which compares sadness to a disease (§IV.1 in the translation found in Adamson and Pormann 2012). But this most likely does not draw directly on Galen himself. For that, we need to wait until al-Kindī's student Abū Zayd al-Balkhī. As with al-Rāzī's *Spiritual Medicine*, the Galenic agenda is already clear from the title of al-Balkhī's treatise *Benefits for Bodies and Souls* (*Maṣāliḥ al-abdan wa-l-anfus*, facsimile text in al-Balkhī 1984; partial translation in Özkan 1990; discussion by Biesterfeldt 2012). As one might anticipate from the title, al-Balkhī divides his remarks into two sections, on the care of body and of the soul, with a transition devoted to the effects of music and poetry on both body and soul. The second part on the care of soul looks at various psychological defects or maladies, such as anger, sadness (this discussion resonates strongly with that of his teacher al-Kindī), and obsessive thoughts (*wasāwis*). The parallel structure to al-Rāzī's paired works, the *Book for Manṣūr* and *Spiritual Medicine*, is striking and perhaps no coincidence. We are told in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm that al-Rāzī studied with a man from Balkh, and it is possible that Abū Zayd is meant (Adamson and Biesterfeldt, forthcoming). Alternatively, both men were drawing independently on Galen's medicalizing approach to ethics. A further Galenic ethical work is the *Refinement of Character* (*Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*) by Miskawayh, which however adds Aristotle and other sources to the mix (text and translation in Miskawayh 1967 and Zurayk 1968). Its final section in particular adheres to the Galenic paradigm, stating explicitly that the soul too has diseases. Miskawayh even cites Galen by name in discussing the nature of character. The *Refinement* brings us full circle by concluding with a long quotation from al-Kindī's *On Dispelling Sadness*.

It is worth stressing that none of these works present the parallel between bodily and psychological maladies, or between medicine for bodies and for souls, as a metaphor or simile. Rather, the claim is that the soul can *literally* be healthy or ill, and that there is *literally* a kind of medicine for the soul. As I have argued elsewhere (Adamson, forthcoming), the texts just mentioned provide good grounds for this. For one thing, there are strong structural parallels between the two kinds of medicine. Psychological medicine attends to both the preservation and the restoration of the soul's good state, just as bodily medicine does for the body (see al-Balkhī, *Benefits*, 269–70; Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 176). Furthermore, both bodily and psychological medicine aim at preserving and restoring balance, harmony, or equilibrium. As al-Rāzī says:

> [Plato] holds that man should, by means of bodily medicine, which is the sort of medicine that is widely recognized (*maʿrūf*), and spiritual medicine, which is achieved by means of proofs and demonstrations, give equilibrium (*taʿdīl*) to the actions of these souls, so that they may neither exceed nor fall short of what is intended. (*SM* 29)

We will see, however, that the “balance” to be sought in the soul does not consist in an equal balance between the soul’s various powers, as the body needs to have its four humors balanced in Galenic medical theory. Instead, the soul’s balance or harmony is for reason to rule over the rest of the soul.

A final consideration that lends plausibility to the idea of “spiritual medicine” is that some maladies involve both body and soul. Al-Balkhī says this explicitly in the case of obsessive thoughts, which manifest in the soul but can arise from a bodily cause, namely an excess of yellow bile (al-Balkhī, *Benefits*, 323–23). The reverse is also true, in that maladies of the soul can cause bodily symptoms. Al-Rāzī remarks, for instance, that envy harms the body, “because upon the incidence of these symptoms in the soul, [the body] undergoes prolonged sleeplessness and bad diet, which are followed by poor coloring, bad appearance, and the disruption of the [humoral] mixture” (*SM* 51). For the idea that psychological phenomena have a physical realization, one might readily think of Aristotle’s famous remarks on anger involving the boiling of blood around the heart (*On the Soul* 403a31, followed by Miskawayh at *Refinement*, 193–94). But a more robust theoretical basis was available to these authors from Galen’s *That the Powers of the Soul Depend on Those of the Body*, which was transmitted into Arabic in a version that still exists today (Biesterfeldt 1972). One of Galen’s favorite examples in that work is drunkenness, since it so clearly illustrates that even the rational soul is affected by a bodily state. Al-Rāzī may be thinking of this in chapter 14 of the *Spiritual Medicine*, which warns against first the bodily, and then the psychological, dangers of drink. Like Galen, he says explicitly that drink has an effect on the rational soul (*SM* 73). Given this mutual interaction of the body and soul, it seems justified to say that medicine cannot restrict its attention to the body alone.

3.2. The Rule of Reason

All this may seem natural enough to us today, since we too speak of “mental illness.” Less familiar is the idea that *ethical* failures are not just defects of the soul, but its diseases. As already intimated, this means for al-Rāzī what it meant for Galen: the failure of reason to dominate a person’s soul and thus to control that person’s behavior. Both are drawing here on Plato’s analysis of the soul, in the *Republic* and *Timaeus*, as having three aspects: reason (called by al-Rāzī either *ʿaql* or “the rational soul,” *al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*), spirit (the “irascible” or “bestial” soul), and desire. Al-Rāzī explicitly presents this in the second chapter of the *Spiritual Medicine* as the view of Plato, though he adds that it can also be ascribed to Socrates (*SM* 31). Though that might suggest that al-Rāzī is thinking of the *Republic*, where Socrates is the main speaker, it is more probable that he is drawing on the *Timaeus* and, more specifically, Galen’s presentation of that dialogue (see further Bar-Asher 1988–89). Galen composed a commentary on the sections of the *Timaeus* relevant to medicine, which is known to us in part through quotations from al-Rāzī. Galen’s paraphrase summary of the *Timaeus* is also lost in Greek, but survives in Arabic translation (Galen 1951).

The influence of the *Timaeus* (by way of Galen) can be seen in al-Rāzī's general statement regarding the three souls:

> According to [Plato] these two souls, the vegetative and irascible, lack the special sort of substance which survives after the corruption of the body, like the substance of the rational soul. Rather, one of them, the irascible, is the whole mixture of the heart, while the other, the appetitive, is the whole mixture of the liver. The whole mixture of the brain, though, is according to [Plato] the first instrument and tool used by the rational soul. (*SM* 28)

The assignment of the three souls to brain, heart, and liver is found in the *Timaeus* (69c–71b), but not the *Republic*. Here we have another point that connects the *Spiritual Medicine* to al-Rāzī's medical interests, given the anatomical dimension of the Platonist psychological theory as found in the *Timaeus*. Indeed, if we glance at al-Rāzī's *Introduction* to the art of medicine, we find him again distinguishing three psychological powers, "natural, animal, and psychic," seated in the liver, heart, and brain (al-Rāzī, *Libro de la introducción*, §11). We may seem to have here a discrepancy in "Plato's" theory as presented by al-Rāzī. If reason is seated in the brain, then how can it survive the death of the body, as stated in the quotation above?

A closer look at the quotation reveals the answer: the lower souls are nothing but mixtures (*amzija*) of bodily organs, whereas the rational soul is not the mixture of brain but rather uses that mixture as its instrument (*āla*). Since the *Spiritual Medicine* is a work on ethics and not psychology, we get less detail about this than we might have liked. In particular, we might wonder how the rational soul will be able to function after death, once its instrument is gone. Unlike Galen, who is notoriously agnostic on the issue, al-Rāzī seems to be firmly committed to the survival of the soul without the body. He asserts, again speaking for Plato, that after the death of the body, the rational soul will still be alive and capable of reasoning (*nuṭq*, *SM* 31). We might infer that even in this life reasoning proceeds without any physical correlate in the brain. A list of the functions of the rational soul provided by al-Rāzī includes "sensation, voluntary motion, imagination, thought (*fikr*), and memory" (*SM* 28). A plausible conclusion would be that all the items on this list apart from thought do require the body, and more specifically the brain's mixture. These functions would then be unavailable after death (raising the question of whether we will remember our earthly existence in the afterlife).

But such a distinction between immaterially realized thought, and materially realized sensation, volition, and so on, seems to be ruled out by al-Rāzī's other writings. In the medical *Introduction*, he predictably makes sensation and voluntary motion dependent on organs such as the nerves. But he also says that the three "governing faculties" of the rational soul, namely imagination, thought, and memory, depend on the "psychic *pneuma*" and are located in the front, middle, and back sections of the brain (al-Rāzī, *Libro de la introducción*, §11.5). Elsewhere in this work al-Rāzī explains that bodily imbalance can undermine "thought" (*fikr*) and "reason" (*ʿaql*) (*Libro de la introducción*, §13.4). All this makes it pretty obvious that, in this life at least, thinking does involve activity in the brain. Even if we take on board the caveat that the brain or its mixture is the soul's "instrument" and not the soul itself, the problem remains. Either this instrument is a necessary tool for thinking, or it is not. If it is necessary, then it is unclear how the soul can go on thinking after death. If not, it is unclear what the brain contributes to thought while we are embodied, and why its impairment should impede thinking.

As already noted, though, this is not the sort of issue that we would expect to be investigated in the *Spiritual Medicine*. In fact, when discussing the fear of death al-Rāzī explicitly refuses to get into a proof of the soul's immortality, since it would need long discussion and call for "demonstration, not reliance on what others have said" (*burhān dūna l-khabar*) (*SM* 93; see further below, section 3.4). For the purposes of this work, what interests him about reason is not its fate after our death, but its primacy in this life. Although the psychological theory discussed above is ascribed to Plato, and not asserted by al-Rāzī in his own name, it is deployed throughout the *Spiritual Medicine* and clearly finds approval with al-Rāzī himself. The exalted status of reason (*ʿaql*) is already underlined at the very beginning of the work. In the first sentence, he calls reason the means "by which we achieve what is beneficial in this world and the hereafter" (*SM* 17). It is valuable not only because of the practical advantages it brings, for instance the building of ships and (of course!) the boon of medical knowledge, but also because we use it to know what is at first obscure to us. Here al-Rāzī mentions as examples astronomy and "knowledge of the Creator," which is the "most beneficial thing we can achieve" (*SM* 18).

Because reason has such a high value, it is wrong to subordinate it to desire. Rather the reverse: we ought always to "have recourse to it, take it into account and depend on it" (*SM* 18). The entire *Spiritual Medicine* is an exhortation and instruction manual for giving reason its proper supremacy. Galen remarks that someone who gives in to anger—that is, domination by the spirited or "animal" soul—is tantamount to a wild beast deprived of reason (*Affections*, 22–23). This comparison of ethically defective people to nonhuman animals appears repeatedly in the *Spiritual Medicine*, beginning with its opening sentences, which state that "it is through reason (*ʿaql*) that we are better than the irrational animal (*al-ḥayawān ghayr al-nāṭiq*)" (*SM* 18; see further Adamson 2012). As the key difference between humans and animals, al-Rāzī highlights our rational capacity to refrain from following the dictates of desire and spirit. The position is stated generally here:

> The man of intellect ought to impede and restrain them [sc. desire and nature], never giving them free rein without having first established and considered what will result, imagining and evaluating this and then following the preponderant course, lest he be pained when he thinks he will be pleased. (*SM* 22)

Al-Rāzī sometimes uses the word *rawiyya*, "deliberation," as a label for the rational capacity to consider a course of action and weigh its appropriateness before embarking on it. Animals lack this capacity, and we "should not be like beasts in unleashing action without deliberation (*iṭlāq al-fiʿl min ghayr rawiyya*)" (*SM* 56).

3.3. PLEASURE

According to what criterion, then, should reason determine whether or not a given course of action is worth pursuing? One answer has been given by L. E. Goodman, who in numerous publications argued that al-Rāzī is an adherent of the ethics of Epicurus (e.g., Goodman 1971, 1972, 1999, 2015). Historically speaking, this would be rather difficult to explain, since Epicureanism was little known in the Arabic-speaking world, if at all. (Our main Greek source, Diogenes Laertius, was not translated into Arabic, and of course Latin sources like Cicero and Lucretius were not available either; Goodman 2015 proposes other possible conduits.) Still, one should not dismiss the idea out of hand. After all, if al-Rāzī is clearly reproducing Epicurean positions, that would itself constitute evidence that information about Epicureanism was somehow available. According to Goodman's interpretation, al-Rāzī is a hedonist, but a refined one. Like Epicurus, he holds that the most pleasant life is achieved through moderation rather than indulgence. Thus Goodman remarks that he derives "a moderate asceticism from purely hedonic considerations," and that "unlike Plato, he remains unswervingly loyal to the hedonic principle as *the* ethical ground" (Goodman 1972, 32 and 34). If this is right, then al-Rāzī's answer to our question would be that one rationally chooses a certain action in terms of what will procure the most pleasure over the long term. This will often mean forgoing immediate opportunities for pleasure. As we saw above, animals are incapable of such self-restraint, since they do not deliberate but simply seize any opportunity for pleasure that comes along.

Certainly, the *Spiritual Medicine* contains passages that support Goodman's interpretation. For example:

> Desire and nature always call one to pursue present pleasures, and to choose them with no thought or deliberation (*min ghayr fikr wa-lā rawiyya*) about the result. They incite and hasten one on towards [the pursuit of pleasure], heedless of the painful outcome afterwards, or the prevention of [further] pleasure which is yet greater than what came before. For these two [sc. desire and nature] take a view only to their current situation, and nothing else, and they reject only the pain that harms them in this very moment (*waqt*). . . . For this reason, it behooves the reasonable person (*al-ʿāqil*) to impede and restrain them [sc. desire and nature], never giving them free rein without having first established and considered what will result, imagining and evaluating this and then following the preponderant course, lest he be pained when he thinks he will be pleased. (*SM* 21–22)

This looks like nothing so much as a recipe for maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain over the long run. But there is a problem with Goodman's interpretation, which is the abundant textual evidence showing that al-Rāzī considers pleasure to have no value at all (Adamson 2008; Goodman 2015, 165-6 actually admits that al-Rāzī denies the core ethical teaching of Epicurus, namely that pleasure is the highest good, but continues to maintain that there are powerful resonances between al-Rāzī and Epicureanism). He adheres to the teaching of Plato's *Timaeus* (among other dialogues, but the *Timaeus* is again his probable source): pleasure is not a good, because it requires the presence of pain or harmful states that are being removed as one is pleased.

Evidence for this can be drawn from reports concerning a lost work by al-Rāzī on pleasure (collected in al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*, 139–64). But the *Spiritual Medicine* itself contains the same teaching:

> Because harm and the departure from nature sometimes occur little by little over a long time, and this is then followed by a sudden return to nature in a short time, in this case we fail to sense being harmed, whereas the return to nature is abundantly clear to the senses, and so we call this "pleasure." So some uneducated people think that [pleasure] occurs without any preceding harm, and they imagine it to be separate and pure, entirely free from harm. But this is not the case. Rather, it is impossible that there be any pleasure at all (*battatan*) except to the same extent as there was a preceding harmful departure from nature. (*SM* 37)

The implication of this, as already emphasized by Plato, is that pleasure cannot be the good—because it by definition implies the presence of harm or pain that is being eliminated through a process that brings us pleasure. This is not to say that all such processes of restoration are pleasant—as in the *Timaeus*, we feel pleasure only when we are restored quickly, just as we experience pain only when we are harmed quickly. As for the natural state, it is always imperceptible, and involves neither pleasure nor pain (al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*, 150). In this respect it is like the state of health, which is likewise said to involve no pleasure (*SM* 66). Here, al-Rāzī's position is in vivid contrast to that of Epicurus, for whom absence of pain was not imperceptible but rather the highest possible pleasure.

Evidently, al-Rāzī is no more a hedonist than Plato. How then can we explain passages in the *Spiritual Medicine* like the one quoted above, in which he encourages us to think about the long-term balance of pleasures and pains involved in a given course of action? A revealing passage is found in his discussion of gluttony, which I quote at length, in part because it is fairly amusing and in part because it is crucial for understanding al-Rāzī's ethical stance:

> A man of Baghdad was eating with me from a big pile of dates that was before us. I stopped after eating a moderate amount, whereas he overdid it until he had eaten almost all of them. After he was full and stopped, when I saw him gazing after what was taken away from the table, I asked him, "aren't you done, and your desire stilled?" He said, "I'd rather be back as I was at first, and that this dish was only just being served to us now." So I said to him, "if the pain and torment of greed is not eliminated for you, even in [your] current state, wouldn't the right thing be to stop before you are full, so as to relieve yourself of the heaviness and bloating affecting you now from being so full, and the prospect of indigestion you might have, which would bring illnesses on you that would cause you many times more pain than the pleasure you have had?" I saw that he understood the sense of what I had said, that it would help

> him and had gotten through to him. Upon my life, this and other such remarks are of more benefit to someone who has not engaged in philosophical training (*riyāḍāt al-falsafa*) than proofs built on philosophical principles (*uṣūl falsafiyya*). For someone who is convinced that the desiring soul is connected to the rational soul only in order to get the body (which plays the role of a tool and instrument for the rational soul) what will preserve it long enough for the rational soul to acquire knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of this world, will restrain his desiring soul and hinder it from getting more than sufficient nourishment, since he sees that the goal and objective of nourishing oneself is not taking pleasure, but preservation, which is not otherwise possible. (*SM* 70–71)

This passage shows that the person who thinks rightly—the one who acts in accordance with "proofs built on philosophical principles"—is entirely unconcerned with pleasure. What he wants is *knowledge*. He eats only to keep himself alive so that he can keep acquiring knowledge, and grudgingly accepts the need to satisfy his desires for this reason. This might put us in mind of the "necessary desires" of Plato's *Republic* (558d–e) or, again a likely source for al-Rāzī's train of thought, *Timaeus* 69c–d, which speaks of "necessary affections (*pathēmata*)", including pleasures and pains.

Something else we learn from this passage, though, is that appealing to such philosophical principles is no good when we are dealing with people who think in terms of maximizing pleasure. Al-Rāzī's advice to the glutton presupposes a hedonist calculus, in which long-term pain is said to trump short-term pleasure. But this advice is offered only because it will convince the glutton to improve on his current attitudes toward food. Persuading him that pleasure is not worth pursuing at all is not on the table (so to speak), because the glutton is not a philosopher. He can only benefit from advice that fits into his hedonistic set of values. Accordingly, this is the kind of advice that al-Rāzī gives: don't overeat, because in the long run it will give you more pain than pleasure. Similar passages scattered throughout the *Spiritual Medicine*, which gave rise to Goodman's "Epicurean" interpretation, can be explained in the same way. They are aimed at a reader who still needs this kind of ethical advice, a reader who does think solely in terms of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain.

3.4. A Regimen for the Soul

One implication of the interpretation just offered is that the *Spiritual Medicine* is not intended to turn us into philosophers. It is, rather, to set us on the right road, by helping us to habituate ourselves so that reason can gain the upper hand over the lower souls. To return to the idea that this is literally a medical work, we can say that al-Rāzī's advice is analogous to the prescription of a diet or exercise regime in the case of bodily medicine. The idea of a "regimen" or training for the soul, analogous to the regimen prescribed for bodies, is already mentioned by Galen (*Traits*, 34). In chapter 2 of the *Spiritual Medicine*, al-Rāzī similarly speaks of "exercise" (*tamrīn*) for the soul (*SM* 20) and of "adjusting" (*waṭana*) the soul to struggle against desire (*SM* 21), a process that is more difficult for some people than for others. The process means not just restraining oneself from harmful pleasures, but even abstaining from harmless ones in order to "exercise the soul" (*SM* 22). As al-Rāzī puts it at one point, his goal is simply to "improve the character traits (*akhlāq*) of the soul" (*SM* 20; elsewhere the term "character trait" is glossed with the term "habit," *SM* 32).

For this purpose, it is not necessary to instill philosophically well-grounded beliefs in the reader. Ideally, al-Rāzī would like us to accept Platonic theories about the nature of the soul, the afterlife, and similar topics, to pursue knowledge rather than pleasure (however long term). But for the purposes of the *Spiritual Medicine*, it will be sufficient if we accept his advice to the point that our lower souls are tamed. Thus, right after presenting his version of Plato's teachings on the soul, al-Rāzī comments:

> Let the reasonable person bear these ideas in mind with the eye of his reason, and make them an object of his concern and attention. But if from this book [sc. the *Spiritual Medicine*] he does not acquire the highest rank and status in this respect, then the least he can do is to adhere to the lowest status, namely to take the view of someone who binds desire to the extent that he does not subject himself to worldly harm in this life. (*SM* 31–32)

The *Spiritual Medicine* is thus revealed to be a carefully designed work, which alludes occasionally to the more exalted truths grasped by philosophers, but spends much of its time berating us for acting like animals. When we behave like beasts, pursuing pleasure without even considering the long-term consequences, we are falling below even the barely acceptable "lowest status" of someone who pays no heed to the afterlife, but at least uses reason to avoid painful experiences in this life and to maximize pleasure over the long term.

It is entirely consistent for al-Rāzī to try to *shame* us into attaining at least this bare minimum, for instance by comparing us to animals when we fail to reflect on our actions before undertaking them. Like Plato and Galen before him, he sees the spirited soul as a useful ally for reason in combating desire, and the spirited soul responds not to reason but to shame or insult. An interesting case is the advice he gives on the topic of fidgeting. This does not sound like a particularly promising context for philosophical insight, but al-Rāzī tells a story that is revealing of his moral psychology. In the anecdote, a king who constantly fidgets, by toying with his beard, is criticized for this by a bold (and courageous!) adviser. The king is furious, but stung into self-improvement by the "rage and haughtiness" in his irascible soul (*SM* 78). Elsewhere in the *Spiritual Medicine*, al-Rāzī describes anger as just another affection of soul that we must defeat—as so often, he says that people who give in to this affection without thought are like beasts (*SM* 55). He also repeats an anecdote from Galen, who spoke of his mother biting into a lock in rage when she couldn't get it open—this is a garbled mixture of *On Passions of the Soul* 16 (an enraged man who bites a key) and 40–41 (on Galen's bad-tempered mother). Despite the intrinsic irrationality of anger, though, people like the king can be aided by it. Anger is useful so long as it is provoked by shame for giving into desire.

Al-Rāzī, then, recognizes at least three stages of moral development. In the first, we are no better than beasts, simply giving into desire. The second stage is achieved not by philosophical reflection, but by taming the lower soul and even recruiting it to the service of reason. This is what is happening when we restrain our desires in light of a hedonistic calculus that pays heed to pain and pleasure in this world, or when we make productive use of anger at our own weakness in the face of desire. Al-Rāzī is explicit, though, that we should seek to "surpass the binding of nature and the struggle against desire, and go on to something different and very much greater" (*SM* 24). This higher goal is the one pursued by philosophers. Having completely subdued desire and spirit to the rational soul, philosophers are no longer motivated by pleasure, but nor need they go to extremes in avoiding pleasure (a point made in the *Philosophical Life*; see below, section 3.5). They place no esteem on the goods of the body that are pursued by the lower souls, whose close ties to the body are not just motivational but also ontological—as we saw, they are nothing but "mixtures" of the liver and heart. Thus the philosopher is already close to living in the way that awaits him after death (more on this in section 3.6). The *Spiritual Medicine* alludes to this third and highest level of ethical attainment, but is not really intended to bring us to it. Rather, al-Rāzī's aim is to move us from the first stage, where the soul is beset by the psychological illnesses caused by dominance of the lower soul (fits of anger, sadness, envy, etc.), to a second stage in which the reason controls the lower soul, but retains merely "second-best beliefs" about what is valuable. Notably, this person is still a hedonist, and must be led to do what is right by considerations of pleasure and pain, or by shame and embarrassment.

An illustration of al-Rāzī's differentiated approach is provided by the final chapter of the *Spiritual Medicine*, on the fear of death. His opening move here is one that has already been mentioned: he declines to give a thorough philosophical discussion of the afterlife. Instead, he will focus on dispelling the fear of death even for the person who believes the soul will die along with the body. The consideration he offers is, again, one based purely on pleasure and pain: "According to the statement of those [who deny the afterlife], after death no suffering (*adhan*) at all will befall man, since suffering is a sensation, and sensation belongs only to what is alive" (*SM* 93). Given that in this life we are subject to pain, from this perspective the nonexistence of death would in fact be preferable to our present life. He goes on to consider a possible hedonist objection: what about all the pleasure I'll miss out on by being dead? This is not a problem either, says al-Rāzī, because the mere absence of pleasure is not painful—only the unsatisfied yearning for pleasure causes suffering, and that again is something to which we are subject only in this life. Again, the result is that death is better than life even for someone who rejects the afterlife (*SM* 93–94).

All these considerations are examples of what I have called "second-best beliefs," and it is interesting to note how close they come to Epicurean arguments against the fear of death (on which see Warren 2004). The right way of thinking about death comes only afterward, as al-Rāzī concludes the *Spiritual Medicine* with a sketch of what might await us if we our souls do not die along with the body. There's good reason for optimism, since the "truthful law" (*al-sharīʿa al-muḥiqqa*) teaches that we will be given eternal blessedness, so long as we have led a virtuous life. Moreover, God will forgive even those who led less than perfect lives, since "He does not demand what is not in [man's] capacity (*wusʿ*)" (*SM* 96). It's characteristic of the *Spiritual Medicine* that the discussion of this second view is much briefer than the foregoing section, where he assumed that the soul dies along with the body. In fact al-Rāzī follows Plato in believing that the soul will live on. But he makes no effort to prove this here. Instead, he focuses on persuading us not to fear death, whether or not we believe in the afterlife. To put the point in the medical terms implied by the title of the work, al-Rāzī wants only to cure people of psychological maladies, including the fear of death. And this is something that can be achieved without actually turning people into philosophers.

3.5. THE *SPIRITUAL MEDICINE* AND THE *PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE*

But of course, al-Rāzī does have a conception of how philosophers should live. Again, the clue is given by a title, in this case *The Philosophical Life* (hereafter cited as *PL*, quoted by page numbers from al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*; English translation in McGinnis and Reisman 2007). Far briefer than the *Spiritual Medicine*, this treatise is a defense of al-Rāzī's own lifestyle from critics who complain that he is insufficiently ascetic. Broadly speaking, he defends a life of moderation, but touches in some detail on other ethical issues such as the benign treatment of animals (see Adamson 2012). Famously, al-Rāzī defends the life of moderation as the one endorsed by Socrates himself, albeit that the younger Socrates led a more ascetic life because of his excessive zeal for philosophy (*PL* 100). Al-Rāzī explicitly connects his discussion here to the earlier *Spiritual Medicine*, which he says provides the indispensable foundation for its ethical teaching (*PL* 101). He then declares the positive teaching that forms the basis for what will follow:

> We have a state after death which is praiseworthy or blameworthy, according to our way of life during the time that our souls were together with our bodies. The best thing, that for which we were created and to which we are led, is not getting bodily pleasures, but acquiring knowledge and acting with justice. These two things [sc. knowledge and justice] liberate us from this world of ours, to the world in which there is neither death nor pain. Nature and desire call us to prefer for the pleasure that is present, whereas the intellect frequently calls us to forsake the present pleasures for things it [sc. intellect] prefers. Our Lord, by Whom we hope to be rewarded and fear to be punished, watches over us and is merciful to us. He does not want us to undergo pain, and He hates injustice and ignorance on our part, loving our knowledge and justice. This Lord punishes those of us who cause pain and those who deserve pain, to the extent that is deserved. One ought not subject oneself to a pain along with a pleasure, when this pain exceeds the pleasure in quantity and quality. (*PL* 101–2)

Although al-Rāzī speaks as if this is nothing but a summary of what he said in the *Spiritual Medicine*, in fact the passage straightforwardly asserts the primacy of values that remain mostly in the background in that earlier text. Now we have a clear identification of knowledge and justice as the goals of human life. Pain and pleasure are still given some weight—we are told again how foolish it is to subject ourselves to pain if it outweighs pleasure, and God Himself is said to hate suffering, an attitude we should imitate by never causing pain to others. But what is really valuable is knowledge and justice, not pleasure, and what is really hateful to God (and to the philosopher) is not just pain, but injustice and ignorance.

It has sometimes been felt that there is a tension between al-Rāzī's two ethical works, in that the *Spiritual Medicine* seems to recommend an ascetic lifestyle, whereas the *Philosophical Life* defends a life that includes the moderate enjoyment of pleasures (Druart 56, following Bar-Asher 1988–89; Druart's solution is broadly similar to the one endorsed here). Whereas the *Spiritual Medicine* is constantly urging us to forgo pleasures, the *Philosophical Life* contains remarks such as this:

> We must not seek pleasure which inevitably involves committing some [deed] that would prevent our being liberated to the world of the soul, or which necessarily leads to a pain whose extent in quantity or quality is greater, and more intense, than the pleasure which we chose. But other pleasures apart from this are allowed for us. (*PL* 102)

The last sentence, with its defensive remark about the acceptability of pleasure, may seem to fit badly with the disdain shown toward pleasure in the *Spiritual Medicine*. But there too, we occasionally find him making the same point, as when al-Rāzī speaks of an "extent of restraining the desires" that "is sufficient" (*SM* 23). In both texts, then, we find the idea that the pursuit of pleasure is acceptable, even if it is not the primary goal of the philosophical life. The two works also agree about that primary goal: though the *Spiritual Medicine* mostly focuses on the task of restraining the lower souls, it does also speak about the higher values of knowledge and justice. We have already seen it allude to the value of knowledge in the passage on the glutton (*SM* 70–71). Justice comes up especially in the penultimate chapter, which however is very brief and consists mostly of an attack on people whose beliefs lead them into injustice (for instance Manichaeans; see further below, section 3.6). Tellingly, the chapter concludes by stating that these brief remarks are "sufficient for our objective in this book" (*SM* 92).

If there is a difference between the two works, then, it is more one of emphasis, which in turn derives from a difference in purpose. In both, al-Rāzī asserts that it is counterproductive to do things that bring more pain than pleasure in the long run. This advice takes center stage in the *Spiritual Medicine*, since it is trying to help us train ourselves so that we are at least better than animals, living in accordance with reason even if we fall short of a philosophical way of life in that our utmost motivation remains pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In the *Philosophical Life*, as one would expect given the title and the fact that al-Rāzī is stridently describing and defending his own way of life, the third, highest way of life is in focus. To live as philosophers, we need to embrace a more advanced set of values, preferring justice and knowledge even to harmless pleasure. True philosophers, like the mature Socrates, will enjoy such pleasures so long as such enjoyment does not undermine an unswerving commitment to knowledge and justice. Still, even a philosopher may forgo harmless pleasures for the sake of training the soul (*PL* 102; al-Rāzī again refers us back to the *Spiritual Medicine*, where he made the same point).

Before leaving this topic let me give one last, particularly memorable, example: sex. Al-Rāzī's discussion of sex in the *Spiritual Medicine* has the general tenor of an abstinence lecture. He summarizes his aforementioned view that pleasure is a mere restoration to the natural state, in an apparent bid to get us to stop pursuing it. There follow numerous warnings about the perils of love, including uncontrolled behavior even worse than what we find among beasts, and the misery visited upon the ardent lover that far outweighs any pleasure he can hope to attain (*SM* 39–40). In short, "The pleasure of sex is the most revolting and repellent of desires from the point of view of the rational soul" (*SM* 39). In light of this it is surprising to discover that in a medical work on sexual intercourse, al-Rāzī commends moderate sexual activity as beneficial for health (Pormann 2007). Turning to the *Philosophical Life*, we find him mentioning Socrates's fathering of children as a sign of appropriately moderate behavior (*PL* 100–101). He even mentions a reason why we should not be celibate: it leads to the "perdition of mankind" (*buwār al-nās*) by thwarting procreation. (For a response to this sort of accusation, see the work in defense of celibacy by the Christian Peripatetic thinker Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, discussed in Druart 2008.) Again, the apparent tension can be dissolved in light of the interpretation offered above. The remarks in the *Spiritual Medicine* are aimed at someone who is weak in the face of sexual desires and needs to be trained, at least to the point of having these desires dominated by reason. But in a medical context, or in the context of discussing a genuinely philosophical life where training is already complete, al-Rāzī is able to commend moderate sexual activity.

3.6. The *Spiritual Medicine* and the Five Eternals

Having reconciled the *Spiritual Medicine* with the *Philosophical Life*, there remains the small matter of squaring it with everything else al-Rāzī said and wrote. As al-Rāzī might say, this would be a long discussion that would take us beyond the requirements of the present work. Still, we should at least briefly address the question of what relation, if any, can be found between the *Spiritual Medicine* and al-Rāzī's notorious theory of the five eternals. The theory is certainly never mentioned explicitly in either the *Spiritual Medicine* or the *Philosophical Life*. That might be another feature of these works explained by their limited aims—one that incidentally helps to explain why they survived, free as they were of his notoriously heretical doctrines. (This did not stop Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, who like other Ismāʿīlīs was a staunch critic of al-Rāzī, from writing a refutation of the *Spiritual Medicine* called *Golden Sayings* (*al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*).) Yet it would be disquieting if we could not at least reconcile these two sides of al-Rāzī's thought, since the theory of the five eternals is replete with ethical significance.

The theory is to a large extent motivated by the need to provide a theodicy (a point noted by Rashed 2008, 170). We have seen al-Rāzī saying that God hates pain (*PL* 101–2), and yet we find tremendous suffering in the world around us. In part for this reason, al-Rāzī postulates an eternal Soul in addition to God. Soul is in several respects similar to God—it exerts causality by emanating, and is an active principle contrasted to the passivity of matter (al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*, 197; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, however, says that Soul is both active and passive, *Maṭālib*, 4: 213). Crucially, though, the Soul is in itself "ignorant" and can become wise only through the gift of reason or intellect (*ʿaql*) bestowed upon it by the Creator (al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*, 204). As Fakhr al-Dīn reports:

> [God], may He be exalted, emanated the light of intellect upon the substance of the Soul, so that, thanks to the light of intellect, it might become clear to [the soul] that the harms inflicted in this union [with body] are greater than the goods that arise in it. (*Maṭālib*, 4: 411)

The Soul's intellectual capacity for acquiring wisdom can be realized only through a learning experience, which teaches it the foolishness of involvement with matter. In a picturesque analogy, al-Rāzī compares God's attitude toward the Soul to that of a wise father toward a foolish son. Such a father might allow the son to wander into a beautiful, but dangerous garden full of thorns and stinging insects, in order to teach the son a lesson. In the same way, God allows the Soul to become involved with matter, even though He knows the suffering that will ensue (al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*, 309).

Our evidence concerning the five eternals theory does not tell us about the relation between this ignorant eternal Soul—which would seem to be a version of the World Soul from Plato's *Timaeus*—and the individual souls of humans and animals. Yet the idea that soul should pursue "liberation" from body is one that ties al-Rāzī's cosmology to his ethical treatises. A passage from the *Philosophical Life*, which has been taken to endorse a theory of animal-human transmigration, says that souls can be liberated only from human bodies. One reason we are allowed to kill savage animals is that it is "similar to the path towards and facilitation of deliverance" (*PL* 105; for discussion see Adamson 2012). The same work speaks of the eternal and unlimited pleasure that awaits us in the afterlife once we are "freed into the world of the soul" (*PL* 102). A bit further on, al-Rāzī describes this state as "eternal good and permanent felicity" (*PL* 103).

The same ideas can be found in the *Spiritual Medicine*. I have already quoted the statement that philosophers "surpass the binding of nature and the struggle against desire, and go on to something different and very much greater" (*SM* 24). This refers to liberation from the body, which can be achieved at least to some extent in this life, first through the restraint of desire and then through the pursuit of knowledge. Were the rational soul to "occupy itself completely with reason (*nuṭq*) it would thereby be freed from the body with which it is entangled" (*SM* 28). Of course death also promises liberation from the body. Speaking on behalf of Plato, al-Rāzī describes life after death as follows:

> [The soul] comes to be in its own world, and after this does not desire attachment to anything of the body at all. It remains by itself alive and rational, deathless and pain-free, happy with its position and place. Life and reason belong to it essentially (*min dhāt*), and it is kept apart from pain by being kept apart from generation and corruption. Its happiness with its position and place are due to its being liberated from the body, and from being in the bodily world. (*SM* 30)

Al-Rāzī adds, however, that the soul that has not learned to disdain bodily things in this life, and has not achieved "true knowledge" of the bodily world, will continue to be attached to bodies after death. In an apparent reference to Plato's belief in reincarnation, al-Rāzī says that this will subject the soul to continued pain, because of the generation and corruption of the body in which it resides (*SM* 31).

Another theme that shows up in both the five eternals theory and al-Rāzī's extant ethical writings is an emphasis on God's wisdom, mercy, and justice. We have already seen that the Razian cosmology introduces an ignorant soul to explain the presence of suffering in the world. This also helps him solve the problem of why the cosmos started to exist when it did, rather than at some other moment. The impossibility of God's arbitrarily choosing a time for the cosmos to begin is a standard late ancient argument for the world's eternity, and will play a significant role in al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (see further Adamson 2016). Al-Rāzī's theory seems simply to presuppose that the cosmos is not eternal (see, however, his discussion of the question at the beginning of his *Doubts about Galen*, translated in McGinnis and Reisman 2007). Yet for God to create at an arbitrary moment would be incompatible with His wisdom. The arbitrariness of such an act can be likened to someone fidgeting with his beard (Fakhr al-Dīn, *Maṭālib*, 4: 405 and 408), an example of foolish behavior also singled out in the *Spiritual Medicine*, as we have seen.

Instead, the ignorant Soul must have provoked the world's creation by suddenly, and foolishly, conceiving a desire to be entangled with matter (al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*, 207–11, Fakhr al-Dīn, *Maṭālib*, 4: 411). God's response to this unfortunate event is said by al-Rāzī to be an instance of His wisdom and mercy. We have already seen him comparing God to a wise father who allows his child to learn the lesson of self-destructive behavior. But God is also merciful, and as we have seen emanates the power of reason or intellect onto the Soul in order to help it to liberate itself from matter. In His wisdom and mercy, He also bestows forms on things in the cosmos in order to make them as good as they can be (al-Rāzī, *Rasāʾil*, 205), even though matter is not capable of perfect reception of Soul and form (Fakhr al-Dīn, *Maṭālib*, 4: 411).

Of al-Rāzī's two ethical works, it is the shorter *Philosophical Life* that more clearly invokes these themes of divine mercy, justice, and wisdom. He follows the Platonic precept that we ought to seek "likeness to God" (Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b; see Druart 1997, 53–56). The person who most imitates God is the one who is "the most knowing, just, merciful and benevolent" (*PL* 108). As a concrete example of human benevolence, al-Rāzī gives the example of benign treatment of animals (*PL* 104–5, cf. Adamson 2012). By contrast, extreme ascetics, like certain Hindus and Manichaeans, depart from the imitation of God when they voluntarily inflict pain on themselves or renounce sex through castration. Even some Muslims go to excess in this respect (*PL* 106). Since pain is hateful to God, these attempts at purity are wholly misconceived—to deliberately seek out suffering is in fact to thwart God's will.

Although the *Spiritual Medicine* has somewhat less to say about these matters, there are clear signs that here too the best, philosophical life both is facilitated by God's mercy and is an imitation of God's mercy. Here we should recall the opening passage (*SM* 17–19), which extols intellect or reason (*ʿaql*) as a gift of God—exactly as the five eternals theory would have it. Another relevant passage is found toward the end of the treatise:

> The way of life (*sīra*) taken up and pursued by the virtuous philosophers is, to put it in a nutshell, acting towards men with justice. Beyond that, it is behaving towards them with virtue, showing continence, mercy, and good counsel towards all and exerting oneself to aid all, apart from anyone who has set out on a course of injustice and evil. (*SM* 91)

Much as he criticized religious sects for their excessive asceticism in the *Philosophical Life*, here al-Rāzī proceeds to attack the Dayṣaniyya, the Muḥammira (a subgroup of the Khurramiyya), and again the Manichaeans (*SM* 91). These groups have religious beliefs that actually require them to be unjust or unmerciful to their fellow man. The Manichaeans, for instance, withhold food and medical treatment from those who are not members of their sect. Al-Rāzī adds that it is in our own interest to show benevolence. If we benefit others, we can expect that they will return the favor (*SM* 92). This looks to be another case of the "second-best beliefs" characteristic of the *Spiritual Medicine*. A philosopher presumably displays mercy for its own sake and in imitation of God, not out of self-interest.

These passages show that, contrary to initial appearances, the *Spiritual Medicine* and *Philosophical Life* are indeed consistent with the five eternals theory, and even animated by the same central concerns. Underlying the popular tone of the *Spiritual Medicine* is not only a well-worked-out psychological theory derived from Plato and Galen, but an ethical theory that makes a godlike life of reason and mercy our ultimate goal. This may be too much to ask of most readers, and al-Rāzī admits that it is a standard he himself cannot always meet. In the *Philosophical Life*, he confesses to shortcomings and remarks that he would not presume to claim the title of "philosophy" for his way of life, at least not in comparison to a true sage like Socrates (*PL* 100–101). In the same breath, though, al-Rāzī claims to lead a philosophical life in comparison to those who are not pursuing philosophy at all. This is what puts him in a position to offer medicine for other people's souls, as well as their bodies—his way of showing benevolence in imitation of God.

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CHAPTER 4

IBN MASARRA'S (D. 931) THIRD BOOK

SARAH STROUMSA

THIS chapter is dedicated to a book we do not have. Muslim sources tell us of several books written by the tenth-century Andalusī thinker Muḥammad Ibn Masarra, but so far only two books identified with certainty as his are known to be extant. In what follows, I will briefly review the evidence regarding Ibn Masarra and his books, then focus on a quotation from a third book, preserved in another source. I will analyze this quotation, and attempt to gauge from it how it stands in relation to what we already know, from other sources, of Ibn Masarra's thought. This somewhat speculative exercise has a double purpose: to draw a profile of this third book in the hope that, in case it happens to have been preserved in some manuscript collection under a different guise, this profile will enhance the chances of scholars to identify it and bring it to light; and to address through this analysis some of the open issues regarding Ibn Masarra's thought and its impact on Andalusī philosophy.

4.1. IBN MASARRA AND HIS BOOKS

Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Najīḥ Ibn Masarra (269/883–319/931) is commonly considered to have been the first Andalusī Muslim thinker of local extraction. Born in Cordoba, he was first educated by his own father ʿAbd Allāh, as well as by Muḥammad Ibn Waḍḍāḥ (d. 287/900) and by al-Khushanī (whose date of death is recorded as 371/981 or 361/971. Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, 4; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, 590; Addas 1992, 913–14; Pellat 1986; Brown 2006b, 51). Like his father before him, he traveled to the East before returning to al-Andalus. He is known to have studied Mālikī law, and some of our sources add to his name the epithet "the jurist" (*al-faqīh*). He spent some time in Qayrawān (Khushanī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 159–60) and in Mecca. In Mecca he may have been associated with the circle of Abū Saʿīd b. al-Aʿrābī, an erstwhile disciple of the Baghdādī mystic al-Junayd, and perhaps with the circle of Muḥammad b. Sālim al-Tustarī, the so-called *Sālimiyya* (Morris 1973, 14–15; Marín 1992; Ebstein and Sviri 2011, 5, 10–11). Another indication of Ibn Masarra's closeness to these circles is the fact that the only Ṣūfī author quoted by name in his *Book of Letters* is Sahl al-Tustarī. Although the *Book of Letters* attributed to Sahl from which he quotes was shown to be a pseudoepigraph, it does indicate Ibn Masarra's participation in the emerging Andalusī Tustarian tradition (Ebstein and Sviri 2011). Upon returning to al-Andalus during the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III *al-Nāṣir* (r. 300/912–350/961) Ibn Masarra withdrew, together with some disciples, to the Cordoban Sierra (hence his appellation *al-jabalī*), and apparently stayed there until his death.[1]

Some twenty years after Ibn Masarra's death, there began an orchestrated public attack on those who were supposedly his followers. The public denunciation and harassment of the so-called Masarrīs (somewhat exaggeratedly presented in modern scholarship as persecution) came in several waves, beginning in 340/952 under the caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III and continuing in 350/961, under al-Ḥakam II, as well as in 381/991, under al-Manṣūr Ibn Abī ʿĀmir. The Masarriyya—a term used only by Ibn Ḥazm, and perhaps, as suggested by James Morris, coined by him—were variously accused of upholding belief in the createdness of the Qurʾān, disseminating disputations concerning God's verses (*āyāt Allāh*), denying the [possibility of] repentance, denying the possibility of the Prophet's intercession, and casting doubt on the *ḥadīth* (Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabas*, 20 ff.; Morris 1973, 12, 17–18, 26–27; Cruz-Hernández 1981; Fierro 1999, 180–84; Fierro 2012, 131–44; Safran 2013, 72–73). Of particular interest is Ismāʿīl al-Ruʿaynī, whose views were rejected by other Masarrīs, and who is said to have claimed the possibility to attain prophecy (*iktisāb al-nubuwwa*), a claim that some of the Masarrīs attributed also to Ibn Masarra himself (Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 67). It is not at all clear to what extant those described as Masarrīs can indeed be seen as disciples of Ibn Masarra, but the edicts that were read in the mosques against them can be helpful in reconstructing Ibn Masarra's image and are indicative of the impact that the doctrines associated with him had in contemporary al-Andalus.

Ibn Masarra's own writings were considered lost until 1972, when Muḥammad Kamāl Ibrāhīm Jaʿfar discovered two of his works in manuscript no. 3168 of the Chester Beatty Collection.[2] These treatises, which were subsequently published and analyzed, by Jaʿfar and then others, brought to an end much of the previous scholarly speculations regarding the nature of Ibn Masarra's thought. They amply demonstrate that Ibn Masarra was neither a Muʿtazilite nor an Aristotelian philosopher, and prove the unquestionably Neoplatonic nature of his philosophical mysticism.[3]

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[1] For Ibn Masarra's biography, see Asín Palacios 1914; Morris 1973, 8–19; Brown 2006b, 39–92; Arnaldez 1986 (who weaves the scant information in our sources into a smooth, but not necessarily reliable, narrative); Ramón Guerrero and Garrido Clemente 2006, 144–46.

[2] Arberry 1955–1966, I, 68–69. The manuscript is a compendium of mystical and magical works, copied in Egypt in the late thirteenth century and including works by various authors.

[3] For scholarly evaluations of Ibn Masarra's thought, see Asín Palacios 1978; Morris 1973; Cruz Hernández 1996, 344–52; Tornero 1993; Addas 1992, 913–19; Stroumsa 2006; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 210

Ibn Masarra was apparently a gifted speaker, although not necessarily in the sense of being a fiery orator. Our sources describe him as a very effective conversationalist, someone who had a way with words ("*ṭarīqa fī l-balāgha*"), whose charismatic personality made a powerful impression on people and attracted to him disciples (al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwa*, 58; also Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Bayān*, 195). An example of the way he talked is preserved by al-Khushanī, who attended in Qayrawān a meeting between the young Ibn Masarra and the famous Mālikī jurist Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Naṣr. In this meeting, Ibn Masarra kept quiet for a long time, but when addressed by Aḥmad b. Naṣr, he answered "in an elaborate yet pleasing way" (*kalām maṣnūʿ, illā annahu ḥasan fī l-kalām jayyid*), saying: "I came to you aspiring to acquire from your light and to rely on your knowledge" (*muqtabisan min nūrika wa-mustamiddan bi-ʿilmika*) and similar things that amounted to a small *khuṭba* (Khushanī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 159–60; also Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Bayān*, 195). Even his opponents concede that he knew how to use "mellifluous speech" (*kalām ʿadhb*), though they stress the fact that he used this talent to lead people astray (Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, 590, quoting Ibn al-Faraḍī), and that "using his silver tongue, he purposefully chose opaque expressions that would hide his meaning" (*wa-kāna lahu lisān yaṣilu bihi ilā taʾlīf al-kalām wa-tamwīh al-alfaẓ wa-ikhfāʾ l-maʿānī*; Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, 41). But he was not a prolific writer: although his contemporary al-Khushanī says that he composed "many books," we learn from an anecdote recounted by Ibn al-Abbār that he took his time revising drafts, and was loath to part with a work before he felt it was ready (Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila*, I, 233–34). His two extant works corroborate the impression emerging from this anecdote: they are remarkably thought out, tightly constructed, and short (Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 213).

Notwithstanding this restrained and controlled approach to writing, our sources attribute to him several books. The number of Ibn Masarra's books remains unknown. Asín Palacios, who was aware of only two titles of Ibn Masarra's works, already assumed that he had composed more (Asín Palacios 1978, 41). A short review of what we know about Ibn Masarra's writings is in order here:

1. The Chester Beatty manuscript contains a short treatise, titled the *Epistle of Contemplation* (*Risālat al-Iʿtibār*). The attribution in the title page (*risālat al-iʿtibār li-l-faqīh Abī ʿAbd Allāh al-jabalī*) clearly identifies Ibn Masarra as its author, and the content and style of the text itself further agree with Ibn Masarra's authorship (Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 208, 212–14, 226). The available biographical and historical sources, however, do not mention this title among Ibn Masarra's works. The treatise describes the mental practice by which a person observes the world and contemplates, in an ascending order, the different levels of existence, thus

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and 214. The nature of Ibn Masarra's Neo-Platonism, and in particular the claims of his so-called Pseudo-Empedoclean teachings, deserve a separate study; see Stern 1971; De Smet 1998; Stroumsa 2002; Braun 2006. On the nature of Ibn Masarra's *bāṭinism*, and in particular his close affinity to the thought of the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, see Tornero 1993, 63; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 210; and see now De Calataÿ 2014. I am grateful to Godefroid de Calataÿ for making this article available to me before publication.

proceeding to the uppermost levels of knowledge (Jaʿfar 1978; Jaʿfar 1982; Garrido Clemente 2007a; Garrido Clemente 2008; Kenny 2002; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009). Although in Ibn Masarra's discourse in this treatise one can sometimes detect echoes of Muʿtazilī theology, its overall Neoplatonic nature is unmistakable (Stroumsa and Sviri 2009).

2. The *Book of Letters*: Ibn Masarra's approach (*ṭarīqa*) to the secrets of the letters is mentioned by Ibn al-ʿArabī as one of Ibn al-ʿArabī's models for his own discourse on the subject. Ibn al-ʿArabī is careful to state his objection to preoccupation with the properties of letters, preoccupation that he also seems to associate with Ibn Masarra (*Kitāb al-Mīm*, 7). Ibn Masarra's recourse to the use of letter-speculation ("*taṣrīf Ibn Masarra fī l-ḥurūf*") is criticized also by Ibn Sabʿīn (*al-Risāla al-faqīriyya*, 14; *al-Fatḥ al-mushtarak*, 253). Ibn al-ʿArabī does not specify the source of his information regarding Ibn Masarra's approach to the secrets of letters and to their properties, nor does he associate this information with any specific book of Ibn Masarra's. Nevertheless, it stands to reason to recognize in his words a reference to the longer of the two texts discovered and published by Jaʿfar. In the Chester Beatty manuscript this work is titled *The Book of the Properties of Letters, Their True Nature and Their Origin* (*Kitāb Khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf wa-ḥaqāʾiquhā wa-uṣūluhā*). As its name indicates, the book is dedicated to letter speculation, where the letters of the Arabic alphabet are presented as divine hypostases and as the manifestations of the divine attributes, overflowing in order to create the universe and control its destiny to eternity. The *Book of Letters* seems to present a more mature mystical-philosophical discourse than the *Epistle on Contemplation*, with clearer echoes of late-antique Neoplatonism, a difference that suggests that the *Book of Letters* was composed later (Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 236, 239). Elsewhere, Ibn Masarra's *Book of Letters* is also explicitly mentioned by Ibn al-ʿArabī, who says that in this book, Ibn Masarra drew attention (*nabbaha*) to the meaning of the Kaʿba (*al-bayt*) and the black stone, which serves as an interpreter (*tarjumān*) between us and the different ranks of divine revelation (Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, II, 646; Massignon 1929, 31). Such a view does not appear in Ibn Masarra's *Book of Letters* as we have it, and there is no obvious saying in this book that can be regarded as a *tanbīh* to this meaning.
3. *The Book of Perspicacity* (*Kitāb al-Tabṣira*) is mentioned by Ibn al-Abbār (*Takmila*, 233–34). Relying on Muslim historiographers, Jaʿfar assumed that Ibn Masarra had written only two books (Jaʿfar 1982, 300). Having established convincingly that the text he found was named *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*, Jaʿfar therefore proceeded to match the discovered book (bearing a previously unattested title) with an attested title (believed until then to belong to a lost work). He thus argued that the *Kitāb al-Tabṣira* mentioned by Ibn al-Abbār must have been another title of the *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*, especially since *iʿtibār* and *istibṣār* were sometimes given a similar meaning (Jaʿfar 1982, 300–306).

Jaʿfar's identification of the two titles has been generally accepted by scholars (including myself; Strousma and Sviri 2009, 203 n. 7). But this identification deserves to be questioned. Ibn al-Abbār mentions the *Kitāb al-Tabṣira* in the context of a story about Ibn Masarra's close and devout disciple Ḥayy b. ʿAbd al-Mālik. This resident of Cordoba used to visit Ibn Masarra in his secluded place of worship in the Sierra ("*fī mutaʿabbadihi bi-l-jabal*"), where he would stay for many days each time, but then leave again. Usually, we are told, Ibn Masarra was careful to go over his own books for a whole year before revealing them. But after Ibn Masarra had completed his *Kitāb al-Tabṣira*, Ḥayy deceitfully managed to get hold of the manuscript, and to make a copy of it. To add insult to injury, this copy was not a faithful rendering of the original. After this incident, Ibn Masarra decided not to reveal his *Kitāb al-Tabṣira* to anyone (Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila*, I, 233–34). The story (although told by the rather hostile Ibn al-Abbār) sounds credible. If so, this would mean that the *Kitāb al-Tabṣira* was never published by its author. It does not seem very likely that the work that reached us as Ibn Masarra's *Risālat al-Iʿtibār* would be a draft of *Kitāb al-Tabṣira* that Ḥayy b. ʿAbd al-Mālik published, in his master's name, despite the latter's known censorship. It is of course possible that Ibn Masarra later integrated the ideas expressed in the *Kitāb al-Tabṣira* into another book. But as mentioned above, the *Risālat al-Iʿtibār* seems to be a relatively early work of Ibn Masarra, and thus not the most likely depository for recycled material from the *Kitāb al-Tabṣira*. Be that as it may, the identification of the two books seems to be unfounded.

4. *The Book of Explanation* (*Kitāb al-Tabyīn*), is mentioned by al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272), who cites a prophetic tradition mentioned in it, which supports the possibility of intercession (*shafāʿa*) of the inhabitants of Paradise on behalf of the inhabitants of Hell (*Tadhkira*, 306–7; Addas 1992, 914; Brown 2006b, 42–43, 85–86). Transmitted on the authority of ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Masarra (Muḥammad's father) and of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, the use of this *ḥadīth* by Ibn Masarra weakens the reliability of the accusations leveled against him and against his disciples that they denied intercession.

   Al-Ḥulal al-mawshiyya, which mentions another *ḥadīth* transmitted by Ibn Masarra, says that it appeared in "a compilation authored by Ibn Masarra" (*mujallad min taʾlīf Ibn Masarra*). This *ḥadīth*, about an agreement that the Prophet had made with the Jews, adds up to other pieces of information that indicate Ibn Masarra's fascination with things Jewish, as well as his preoccupation with eschatology (Stroumsa 2006; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 212, 228, 231, 244). Ibn Masarra's eschatological preoccupation, as well as his belief in intercession, is reflected also in another tradition attributed to Ibn Masarra, a *ḥadīth* on the intercession of ascetics (*zāhidīn*) on behalf of sinners—supposedly something that Ibn Masarra had found in the Psalter (*al-Zabūr*) (al-Thaʿālibī, *ʿUlūm*, II, 35: Morris 1973, 24; Brown 2006b, 44–45).

As mentioned above, Ibn Masarra was educated by traditional scholars like Ibn Waḍḍāḥ and al-Khushanī, and attended the circles of Mālikī jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars. Not surprisingly, his own extant works include some prophetic traditions, although he dispenses with the *isnād* (Jaʿfar 1978, 313; compare Fierro 1999, 179), and it is quite possible that in his nonextant works prophetic traditions played a more prominent role. The *Kitāb al-Tabyīn* may have been identical with the *mujallad* mentioned by *al-Ḥulal*, or it may have been another book dedicated to prophetic traditions, but it could also have been a speculative book in which a *ḥadīth* is quoted.

5. *Kitāb Tawḥīd al-mūqinīn*, to which we will return further below, is mentioned by Ibn al-Marʾa (d. 611/1214), in his *Sharḥ al-Irshād,* and the relevant lines were published by Massignon (1929, 70).
6. The *al-Muntaqā min kalām ahl al-tuqā* ("A selection from the sayings of the pious ones") is not mentioned as a work of Ibn Masarra's by any of our sources. The title page of the manuscript attributes it to a certain Aḥmad Ibn Masarra b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurṭubī. According to the editor of the text, Mehmet Neçmettin Bardakçi, a comparison of this text with Ibn Masarra's *Epistle of Contemplation* reinforces the likelihood that it is indeed Ibn Masarra's (Bardakçi 1998, 41–42, 132–35; Bardakçi 1999, 53). Garrido-Clemente, on the other hand (who refers to this work by the title that appears in its introduction, *al-Gharīb al-Muntaqā min kalām al-tuqā* ("A selection of extraordinary sayings from the sayings of the pious ones"), doubts Ibn Masarra's authorship and, relying on other Andalusī sources, suggests identifying the author of this book as Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Khamīs al-Jābūrī (Ramón Guerrero and Garrido Clemente 2006, 150). A manuscript bearing the same title (*al-Gharīb al-Muntaqā min kalām al-tuqā*) is listed by van Koningsveld (1991:818; 1992:96, no. 33 in his list). This manuscript (Madrid, CSIC, no. 001227530), which holds indeed the same text published by Bardakçi, is presented as extracts from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, compiled by *al-shaykh al-faqīh* Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Malik al-Maʿmarī al-Ubādhī. Another person involved in the compilation was a certain Aḥmad b. ʿAlī Shallūn. One should also note that the somewhat verbose style of this text (reflected in its length) seems quite different from that of the two texts published by Jaʿfar.

Apart from the book titles, some of the sources attribute to Ibn Masarra sayings that are not associated with a specific book. Al-Ḥumaydī (d. 488/1095), for example, mentions "compositions on meanings" (*tawalīf fī l-maʿānī*). These compositions may have been dedicated to the interpretation ("meaning") of Qurʾānic verses, or may have been identical with one of Ibn Masarra's known books mentioned above.

In addition to speculative thought, Ibn Masarra is said to have composed some poetry. Al-Ḥumaydī records a poem for a rainy day, in which Ibn Masarra had invited the Mālikī scholar Abū Bakr al-Luʾluʾī to join him in a place "which is indicated only by a hint, like a concealed secret" (*makān ka-l-ḍamīr al-maknī*).[4] But according to al-Ḥumaydī, this poem was recited to al-Luʾluʾī, not written in a book. Ibn al-Faraḍī cites a few lines from a poem in which Ibn Masarra lamented the death of his brother Ibrāhīm in Alexandria.[5] This poem is cited also by Ibn Ḥayyān, along with another poem by Ibn Masarra (Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabas*, 32, 34). Lines from other poems are quoted by al-Kattānī (*Tashbīhāt*, 222, 271). But there is no indication that Ibn Masarra was particularly known as a poet or that his poems were collected.

All in all, we thus know of five (or six) book titles by Ibn Masarra. But there may have been more, and on the other hand, it is possible that two or more titles refer in fact to the same book. What seems certain, however, is that Ibn Masarra wrote more than the two books published by Jaʿfar.

4.2. IBN MASARRA'S *TAWḤĪD AL-MŪQINĪN*

Apart from these two books, the only excerpt we have so far that is explicitly associated with a named book of Ibn Masarra's is the one cited by Ibn al-Marʾa from the *Tawḥīd al-mūqinīn*. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to this book.

Ibn al-Marʾa b. Dahhāq al-Mālaqī (d. 611/1214), a Ṣūfī author associated with "the School of Murcia," quotes Ibn Masarra's *Tawḥīd al-mūqinīn* in his commentary on al-Juwaynī's *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qawātiʿ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād* (Brown 2006b, 74). Ibn al-Marʾa's *Sharḥ al-Irshād* is still unedited, but Louis Massignon published the passage relevant to Ibn Masarra, from the Cairo manuscript, almost a century ago (Massignon 1929, 70).[6] Ibn al-Marʾa was the "*shaykh*" of Ibn Sabʿīn (d. 668/1269), or more precisely, the teacher of his teacher Ibn Aḥlā (d. 645/1247); hence Morris's observation that Ibn al-Marʾa's quotation from Ibn Masarra "witnesses to a continuous 'Ṣūfī' tradition of study of Ibn Masarra in the interval between al-Ḥumayḍī and Ibn al-ʿArabī" (Morris 1973, 23; see also Brown 2006b, 82–83). The appearance of Ibn al-ʿArabī's highly sophisticated mystical system has been often regarded by scholars as unexplained, in the sense that it seems to be springing from the ground in full glory, with no apparent continuous development that gradually leads to it (ʿAfīfī 1933; Addas 1992; Sviri 1996, 78; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 211, 215). Morris's observation means therefore that in his view Ibn al-Marʾa's quotation from Ibn Masarra can serve as a fingerpost that may help us retrace the transmission and development of this mystical tradition. Admittedly, as a witness for such a grand tradition, this quotation is frustratingly short. Nevertheless, if we collate it with other, in themselves equally meager pieces of evidence, it may allow us to add some missing pieces to Ibn Masarra's still largely incomplete puzzle.

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[4] Ironically, this Abū Bakr al-Luʾluʾī was the teacher of the Qāḍī Muḥammad b. Yabqa b. Zarb, who was responsible later (in 350/961) for the burning of Ibn Masarra's books (Fierro 2012, 131). The invitation's wording can be either a poetic reference to Ibn Masarra's home, or it may allude already to his distant mountainous abode. Morris 1973, vi, assumes that Ibn Masarra was then still living in Cordoba, but there is no indication for it in the text, and al-Ḥumaydī cites this poem after saying that some of Cordoba's inhabitants had (already?) been led astray by him (*ʾftutina*). This poem is then quoted also by Ibn Khāqān (*Maṭmaḥ al-anfus*, 58) and al-Ḍabbī (*Bughya*, 78).

[5] Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 23; Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabas*, 34. Ibn al-Faraḍī's remark that Ibrāhīm "was not like his brother" does not tell us much about either brother, but it does seem to reflect the author's animosity to Ibn Masarra.

[6] Massignon identifies the excerpt as derived from "ms. Caire, fin du t. IV, '*bāb al-malāʾika*.'" This refers in all likelihood to MS Cairo, *Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, tawḥīd* no. 6, copied in 739/1338–39. I am indebted to Jan Thiele for this information.

The book's title, *God's Unity as Upheld by Those Who Know with Certainty*, (*Tawḥīd al-mūqinīn*) tallies with what we know from other sources regarding Ibn Masarra's thought.

The preoccupation with the meaning of *tawḥīd* is of course inherent to Muslim thought. Divine attributes seem to have taken a prominent place in Ibn Masarra's unitarian thought, as they did in the thought of the followers of the Muʿtazila, "the proponents of Divine Unity and Justice" (*ahl al-ʿadl wa-l-tawḥīd*). This, however, is not sufficient to warrant seeing the origins of Ibn Masarra's thought in early Muʿazilī discussions (compare Morris 1973, 23; Arnaldez 1986, 868. Ramón Guerrero and Garrido Clemente 2006, 150).

Significantly, Ibn Masarra does not seem to be concerned with the meaning of *īmān* ("belief") or of *islām*, two equally central concepts, germane to the issue of *tawḥīd.* Discussions of these two concepts were often of legal character, as they served to delineate the community of believers, in an attempt to draw a clear line between it and those outside, both heretics and infidels (Stroumsa 1999, 1–7). A question regarding the typical traits of the believer (*ṣifat al-muʾmin*), addressed to "one of the ascetics (*baʿḍ al-zuhhād*)," is attributed to Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, who may have been one of Ibn Masarra's sources of inspiration (Ibn al-Khayr, *Fahrasa*, 274). Several historiographical sources accuse Ibn Masarra as well as the so-called Masarrīs of distancing themselves from the rest of the Muslim community. Ibn Masarra is said "to have adopted an aloof comportment" (*maʿrūf bi-madhhab min al-iʿtizāl*—Abū l-Walīd Ibn al-Faraḍī, quoted in *Muqtabas*, 32; "*inqabaḍa ʿan akthar al-nās*"—al-Khushanī, *Akhbār*, 135), and the Masarrīs are similarly accused of advocating separation from the community (*qālū bi-l-iʿtizāl ʿan al-ʿāmma*), of neglecting to properly salute their fellow Muslims, and of regarding non-Masarrīs as outside the pale of Islam. In both cases, the wording of the accusation may well be intended also to derisively insinuate their supposed Muʿtazilī inclinations (although, as mentioned above, Ibn Masarra was not a Muʿtazilī, nor were his followers, and, in general, the Muʿtazila as a movement did not get a foothold in Andalus [see Stroumsa 2014]). But the main thrust of the accusation is clearly a condemnation of their social alienation. It has been suggested that, in the case of the Masarrīs (and especially Ismāʿīl al-Ruʿaynī and the circle of his followers), this antisocial behavior may have reflected their doubts regarding the religious state of those outside their circle; if the belief of the others is faulty, and they are not true Muslims, then withdrawal from their midst would be a religious obligation, as would the refusal to salute them as Muslims (*Muqtabas*, 20–24, 30–36; Brown 2006b, 50–51; Morris 1973, 35). According to Ibn Ḥazm, Ismāʿīl al-Ruʿaynī considered al-Andalus to be *dār kufr*, and went so far as to declare licit the killing of those who did not follow him (Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 67; repeated in al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, I, 466). Whether or not this line of thought dictated the behavior of al-Ruʿaynī's followers, nothing in Ibn Masarra's writings suggests such preoccupation with the predominantly legal definition of who is a believer. His interest in the meaning of *tawḥīd*, philosophical and theological in character, goes in completely different directions, and his *iʿtizāl* was most probably also not a result of such legal concern, but of the search for the seclusion required for mystical contemplation.

Closely related to the issue of divine unity is the epistemological quest for unequivocal knowledge (*yaqīn*). Both the *Risālat al-Iʿtibār* and the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* present ways to achieve this knowledge, the first through the correct contemplative practice, the object of which is the physical world, the second through deciphering the ontological significance of the Arabic letters. At the outset of the *Epistle of Contemplation* Ibn Masarra states:

> [God] sent the prophets, God's prayers and blessings upon them, to proclaim to people and to clarify for them the esoteric things, and to attest to these things by manifest signs. This is in order that they may attain certitude (*yaqīn*), for which they will be recompensed and brought to account, and on which they will be questioned. (Jaʿfar 1978, 350; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 217)

The success or failure in the quest for certitude, perceived as essential for human salvation, thus has grave soteriological consequences. The success in this quest is described as the attainment of human perfection, when, at the end of the contemplative process, "certitude is revealed, and the hearts attain the realities of faith" (Jaʿfar 1978, 351; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 218). During a human life, the pursuit of certitude is an ever-continuing process:

> The more the contemplator observes, the more he sees, and the more he sees, the stronger he becomes in conviction (*taṣdīq*), divine aid (*tawfīq*), certitude (*yaqīn*) and beholding (*istibṣār*). (Jaʿfar 1978, 359; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 225)

The end result of this process is the attainment of "the knowledge of the Book," and with it, the aspired to rank of the *mūqinūn*:

> No mortal can attain knowledge of the science of the Book unless he brings together what is recounted with contemplation, and verifies that which he hears by that which he beholds. May God include us and you among those who have certitude, those who seek to behold (*min al-mūqinīn al-mustabṣirīn*). (Jaʿfar 1978, 351; Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 219)

Although the concept *yaqīn* is more prominent in the *Epistle of Contemplation*, which is wholly dedicated to the quest for knowing and understanding, its significance is also clearly stated in the *Book of Letters*. In the beginning of the book Ibn Masarra describes the three complexes (*jumal*), which together make up the entire, all-encompassing science contained in God's revealed book. Ibn Masarra characterizes each of these three complexes by the instruments and practices typical to it and which are its epistemological tools, as well as by its ultimate epistemological outcome. The first and highest complex, the science of Lordship (*ʿilm al-rubūbiyya*), is characterized by "its indications (*dalāʾil*) and attestations (*shawāhid*)," as well as by its outcome, which is the unequivocal, certain knowledge (*yaqīn*; Jaʿfar 1978, 312).

The title *Tawḥīd al-mūqinīn* thus suggests that, unlike the two other extant books, which dealt with the process of attaining knowledge of the truth, either through contemplation of the world or by uncovering the revelation crafted in letters, this third book was focused on the truth itself, in its purest form. The analysis of this bold title indicates that the book dealt with the core of Ibn Masarra's mystical philosophy, namely his perception of the divine as it becomes known to the happy few who know with certitude.

In this sense, the *mūqinūn* are clearly an elite group. As mentioned above, the Masarrīs were accused of denying prophetic intercession, and of claiming the possibility to attain prophecy. In the case of Ibn Masarra himself, as we have seen, the transmission of prophetic traditions attributed to him suggests on the contrary that intercession played some role in his thought. But the accusations against him and his followers can reflect either the Masarrīs' aspiration for direct contact with the divine truth (an aspiration that is clearly discernible in the thought of Ibn Masarra himself), or the way this aspiration was interpreted by others.

In addition to the name of the book, Ibn al-Marʾa's reference to Ibn Masarra also presents its content (or at least, one of the ideas it contained). The text reads as follows:[7]

> Ibn Masarra said in his book *Tawḥīd al-mūqinīn* that the attributes of God, the Blessed, are infinite in number. According to him,[8] God's knowledge is living,[9] knowing, powerful, hearing, seeing, and speaking. In the same way, His power is described as living, knowing, powerful, willing, and having a hearing with which it hears. The same applies to all His attributes. He said: "This is the way to proclaim God's unity."[10] He thus depicted the attributes as Gods. This is also what he said regarding the attributes of the attributes,[11] *ad infinitum*. He thus made God into an infinite number of gods—may we find refuge in God.

It is not clear what part, if any, of this text is an exact quotation of Ibn Masarra's own words and how much of it is a paraphrase. As Ibn al-Marʾa is clearly opposed to

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[7] قال ابن مسرة في كتابه توحيد الموقنين بان صفات الله سبحانه لا نهاية لعددها فعلم الله عنده حي عالم قادر سامع بصير متكلم وكذلك قدرته موصوفة بانها حية عالمة قادرة مريدة لها سمع تسمع به وكذلك القول في جميع صفاته وقال هكذا هو التوحيد فقد صير الصفات الهة وكذلك قوله في صفات الصفات الى غير نهاية فجعل الاله الهة لا نهاية لها, والعياذ بالله.

[8] Brown 2006b, 74, reads "*ʿindihi*" and translates "with respect to Him."

[9] Brown 2006b, 74, translates "a Living One" etc.

[10] "*Hākadhā huwa l-tawḥīd.*" I understand *tawḥīd* here as a human action. Compare Brown 2006b, 74: "this is divine unity."

[11] Brown 2006b, 74, apparently regards the "attribute of attributes" as a redundancy due to a copyist's error, and corrects it in his translation.

Ibn Masarra's position, it is also evident that his presentation distorts Ibn Masarra's ideas. His interpretation of Ibn Masarra's position is a hostile caricature, whereby Ibn Masarra's theory of attributes makes him a polytheist, whereas for Ibn Masarra himself the theory of attributes was part of his attempt to preserve God's unity to the utmost. Ibn al al-Marʾa's presentation also implies that Ibn Masarra accepted the validity of an actual infinite series as well as the possibility of one attribute being also the attribute of another attribute. Both claims would be considered serious breaches of commonly held scientific axioms: actual infinite series were rejected by practically everyone; and the *mutakallimūn*'s atomism precluded the possibility of one accident residing in another.

Nevertheless, if we ignore Ibn al-Marʾa's hostile interpretation, this text does agree with what other sources tell us about Ibn Masarra's position regarding the attributes. Although only a few lines long, this text summarizes what proclaiming God's unity—and we may add, proclaiming God's unity, as do those who have certitude—means. Correct understanding of the divine attributes lies at the heart of this true *tawḥīd*. The statement quoted by Ibn al-Marʾa indicates precisely that for Ibn Masarra the divine attributes are not accidents. On the other hand, we can assume that, in the terminology of the general debate over the attributes, Ibn Masarra would probably say that the attributes are also not entities (*maʿānī*) and have no separate, independent ontological value. Although human beings use the same wording—knowing, powerful, willing, and so on—to describe human attributes, the interchangeability of the divine attributes and the way they flow into one another in Ibn al-Marʾa's presentation distinguish them from the ontological distinctiveness, the plurality, and the corporeality of human attributes.

Scriptural language dictates the use of these attributes, but in Ibn Masarra's thought the Qurʾānic terminology—the divine attributes and God's ninety-nine beautiful names—becomes steps in the ladder leading up to the knowledge of the one God, a ladder that presumably, once this knowledge is attained, is no longer necessary. The imagery of the ladder of ascension appears explicitly in both of Ibn Masarra's extant works. In the *Epistle of Contemplation* Ibn Masarra presents the world, with all its creatures and signs, as a ladder by which those who contemplate ascend to the great signs of God on high (Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 218, 230; and see Altmann 1967). In the *Book of Letters* he cites the prophetic tradition that says: "On the day of resurrection the reciter of the Qurʾān will be told: 'Recite and ascend, for you are at the last step,' " and adds: "The number of the levels of Paradise is equal to the number of the verses in the Qurʾān, which is equal to the number of the names" (Jaʿfar 1978, 313). In this context, it is interesting to note the saying attributed by Ibn al-Farrāḍ to the Sālimiyya, to whose circle Ibn Masarra may have become close during his Meccan sojourn. According to this saying, "Through a single attribute God comprehends that which He comprehends through all His attributes" (Brown 2006b, 42 and n. 92; Böwering 1979, 94).

Ibn Masarra's position on the attributes as presented here is strikingly similar to the one ascribed by Ibn Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī to the Greek philosopher Empedocles. Ibn Ṣāʿid interrupts his discussion of Empedocles in order to note that "Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh

Ibn Masarra *al-jabalī al-bāṭinī* of Cordoba was a fervent follower of [Empedocles's] philosophy, steadily striving to study it." He then says:

> Empedocles was the first whose approach combined the meanings of God's attributes (*maʿānī ṣifāt Allāh*), saying that they all come down to one thing, and that, although He is described by [the terms] "knowledge," "benevolence," and "power," He does not possess distinct entities (*maʿānin*)[12] which are characterized specifically by these diverse names. Rather, He is the truly One, who has no plurality in any way whatsoever, as opposed to other beings. For [all] the "ones" in this world are subject to plurality, either in their parts or in their entities, or in that they have parallels. But the essence of the Creator is above all this.

Ibn Ṣāʿid concludes this passage by stating that, regarding the divine attributes, this was also the approach of Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf al-Baṣrī (Ibn Ṣāʿid, *Ṭabaqāt*, 73; repeated in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn*, 37).

This passage in Ibn Ṣāʿid's *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, which seems to associate Ibn Masarra with both Empedocles and Abū l-Hudhayl, is largely responsible for the emergence of two enduring theories in the history of modern scholarship of Andalusī philosophy: that of the so-called Pseudo-Empedocles (associated by Asín Palacios with "the school of Ibn Masarra"), and that of the Andalusī Muʿtazilī school. The discussion of these two theories, both equally unfounded and yet, phantom-like, quite persistent, is beyond the scope of this chapter (see van-Ess 1991–97, 4:272–74; Tornero 1985; De-Smet 1998; Stroumsa 2002; Brown 2006b, 94–103; Stroumsa 2014). In the present context, Ibn Ṣāʿid's information is important only insofar as he too sees Ibn Masarra's approach to the attributes as reflecting a strict theology of unity (Morris 1973, 37).

In the same vein, Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba reports that Ibn Masarra used to say that God's knowledge and His power are both temporal, created attributes (*ṣifatāni muḥdathatāni makhlūqatāni*), and that God has two [kinds of] knowledge, both of them temporal: the first is God's knowledge of universals (*kulliyyāt*; or, in another version, His knowledge of the Book), which is the knowledge of that which is hidden (*ʿilm al-ghayb*), and His knowledge of the particulars and of that which is seen (*ʿilm al-shahāda*). For Ibn Ḥazm, this distinction proved Ibn Masarra's agreement with the Muʿtazila regarding free will (*qadar*), since it allowed Ibn Masarra to preserve God's omniscience while allowing for human exercise of free will (Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 65–66). The use of the Qurʾānic vocabulary in Ibn Ḥazm's report fits indeed Ibn Masarra's thought, as we know it from his *Book of Letters*, where Ibn Masarra says:

> Therefore He, greater than any speaker, said: "He knows the hidden and the manifest" (Qurʾān 13:9). For all things are two things: external and inner. He possesses

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[12] The use of the word "entities" (*maʿānin*) to denote the ontological reality of the attributes is well attested. Nevertheless, and despite Ibn Masarra's apparently well-known interest in this topic, it does not seem likely that in al-Ḥumaydī's above-mentioned reference to Ibn Masarra's "compositions on the *maʿānī*" he intended compositions devoted specifically to this subject.

> the knowledge, which encompasses the inner and the external. The [knowledge] encompassing the inner is unique to Him. It is His preserved tablet and His concealed name, that is, *Lām*. And the [knowledge] encompassing the external, namely the body of the whole, is the greater soul. This is the dominion (*mulk*), and it is what He, of exalted memory, referred to by *Mīm*. (Jaʿfar 1978, 326)

Further on, Ibn Masarra returns to these two kinds of knowledge and says:

> From the first attribute, which pertains to the letter *ṣād*, God is named maker (*ṣāniʿ*) and creator, a form-giver (*muṣawwir*); by it He made all. . . . Explaining the first attribute, God said: "He is God, there is no God but He, the knower of the hidden and the manifest, He is the merciful, the compassionate." (Qurʾān 59:22; Jaʿfar 1978, 329)

And he returns to the combination of "the hidden and manifest knowledge" yet again, saying:

> The knowledge of the hidden is the primordial one, and the knowledge of the manifest is the lower knowledge which encompasses the completed existents, those existents that left the domain of the possible and appeared, becoming manifest to sight. Therefore God said: "He knows the hidden and the manifest." (Jaʿfar 1978, 339)

Ibn Ḥazm's report thus seems to rely on close familiarity with Ibn Masarra's sayings. In Ibn Masarra's thought, the distinction between two kinds of divine knowledge served to explain God's involvement in the world—its creation and the knowledge of the existent beings—while preserving His detachment from the changing and multiple beings. By presenting the two facets of the attribute of knowing, Ibn Masarra manages to keep the complete unity of God, the Creator. Ibn Ḥazm clearly misinterprets Ibn Masarra's ideas when he attributes to him the saying that "God's knowledge is other than God" (*Fiṣal*, II, 128–29). Nevertheless, behind Ibn Ḥazm's misrepresentation we can recognize again, on the one hand the notoriety of Ibn Masarra's preoccupation with divine attributes, and on the other hand Ibn Masarra's attempt to reach, beyond the attributes, to the completely transcendental One.

Ibn Masarra's preoccupation with divine attributes may have been fed by *kalām* discussions, and Ibn Ṣāʿid is probably right in presenting Ibn Masarra's ideas as closer to the formulations adopted by the Muʿtazila then to traditionalist positions. Nevertheless, Ibn Masarra is not driven by Muʿtazilī concerns, but rather thinking of the Qurʾānic text in the context of a mystical emanation theology. Ibn Ṣāʿid's association of Ibn Masarra in this context with Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf says more about Ibn Ṣāʿid's knowledge of the Muʿtazila than about Ibn Masarra's association with them.

4.2.1. Throne

The paragraph in Ibn al-Marʾa presents the theological, rational side of Ibn Masarra's thought. Its treatment of the divine attributes stresses the unparalleled and wholly transcendental nature of God's unity, while maintaining the scriptural language and what it says about God's relation to the world. If this were our only source of information regarding Ibn Masarra, we could have come to the conclusion that it presents a full picture of Ibn Masarra's position, but the opinion we would have formed of him in that case would have been quite wrong. In line with his Neoplatonic, mystical thought, Ibn Masarra's discussion of the divine attributes also has a figurative, mythical side. The divine Throne plays an important role in his thought, and, although it is not mentioned by Ibn al-Marʾa, it is relevant to our discussion here.

The Throne (*ʿarsh*) appears several times in Ibn Masarra's extant writings. In the *Epistle of Contemplation* it is the first created being, and it encompasses all things. The Throne is identified with the universal intellect (*ʿaql*), and within it God "inscribed all His decrees and rulings and that upon which His will is borne" (Stroumsa and Sviri 2009; 224, 237). In the *Book of Letters* the Throne is identified with the Tablet (*al-lawḥ*) and with the letter *Lām*. Ibn Masarra also mentions briefly the four angels who carry the Throne, but he does not describe them in detail (Jaʿfar 1978, 332, 333, 334, 336, and 340).

A more detailed description of these four angels appears in Ibn al-ʿArabī's *Meccan Revelations*, where Ibn al-ʿArabī states that, according to what was transmitted from (*ruwīnā ʿan*) Ibn Masarra, the Throne, which is carried by the angels, is kingship or sovereignty (*mulk*). It is constrained by a body, spirit, sustenance, and rank ("*wa-huwa maḥṣūr fī jism wa-rūḥ wa-ghidhāʾ wa-martaba*"). He further says that Ādam and Isrāfīl are in charge of the forms (*li-l-ṣuwar*); Jībrīl and Muḥammad in charge of the spirits; Mīkāʾīl and Ibrāhīm in charge of livelihoods ("*arzāq*") and sustenance (*ghidhāʾ*); and Mālik and Riḍwān in charge of the promise and threat. At the end of the same chapter, Ibn al-ʿArabī mentions Ibn Masarra again in connection with the form of the Throne's four carriers: one of these angels, he says, is in the form of a man, the second in the form of a lion, the third in the form of an eagle, and the fourth in the form of a bull (Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 348, 355; Stroumsa 2006, 103–4). The ultimate dependence of this description on the book of Ezekiel and on Jewish speculations on the divine Chariot is obvious (see Asín Palacios 1978, 77 and n. 13, who cites Munk 1859, 492). The question remains, who introduced this detailed description: Ibn al-ʿArabī himself, or Ibn Masarra.

The description of the Throne's carriers does not appear in the two texts published by Jaʿfar, and indeed Ibn al-ʿArabī does not say where he found this information (compare Tornero 1993, 60, who understood Ibn al-ʿArabī as referring to the *Book of Letters*; and see Stroumsa 2006, 103). The attribution to Ibn Masarra of a statement according to which the archangel Mīkāʾīl and the prophet Ibrāhīm are in charge of livelihoods ("*arzāq*") is repeated elsewhere by Ibn al-ʿArabī (*Fuṣūṣ*, 69; Morris 1973, 23–24), which is why I am inclined to believe that Ibn al-ʿArabī indeed took the chariot-image from Ibn Masarra.

What we hear about Ibn Masarra's supposed disciples strengthens this possibility. One of Ismāʿīl al-Ruʿaynī's "seven theses" (*aqwāl sabʿa*) was "that the Throne governs the world" (*inna l-ʿarsh huwa lladhī yudabbiru l-ālam*; Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal,* IV, 199–200; Asín, pp. 106–117m counts, in fact, eight theses).). Ibn Ḥazm relates this information on the authority of al-Ruʿaynī's grandson, but adds that al-Ruʿaynī's own son denied his nephew's information (Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, IV, 138, V, 65–67; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, I, 466). For al-Ruʿaynī, this "thesis" seems to have been followed necessarily from God's complete transcendence, for "God is above having any act attributed to him" (*inna llāh ajall min an yūṣafa bi-an yafʿala shaʾyan qatt*; Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, IV, 138, V, 65–67; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, I, 466).[13] Following Ibn Ḥazm, Morris regards the attribution of this idea to Ibn Masarra as doubtful (Morris 1973, 31–32). But Ibn Masarra's own texts suggest that there was a strong basis for the association of these sayings regarding the Throne with Ibn Masarra, by both al-Ruʿaynī and Ibn al-ʿArabī. They may have found these sayings in Ibn Masarra's oral teaching, as Morris (26 n. 37) suggests, or in another yet unknown text of Ibn Masarra's. Ibn al-ʿArabī's words: "*ruwīnā ʿan* . . ." could point to oral transmission. Alternatively, it can indicate that the description of the divine Chariot, or part of this description, may have appeared in one of Ibn Masarra's collections (*tawālīf*) containing prophetic traditions. Since, however, this description relates to God's governance of the world and touches on the more esoteric aspects of *tawḥīd*, it is also quite possible (and to my mind, a more likely possibility), that the description of the Throne was also part of the *Tawḥīd al-mūqinīn*.

As mentioned above, the publication of Ibn Masarra's texts by Jaʿfar categorically disproved some suggestions regarding Ibn Masarra's thought that had been put forward by eminent scholars on the basis of excerpts in later sources. This can serve as a reminder, if a reminder is required, of how careful one must be in relying on later sources, and in particular in reconstructing from them the missing pieces (and see Schwarz 1972). And yet, bearing this caveat in mind, we must do with whatever material we possess. The present attempt to squeeze more information from the few lines in Ibn al-Marʾa's *Sharḥ al-Irshād* is such a speculative reconstruction, which relies on the agreement between this short text and other sources. It is hoped that this chapter may be of help in discovering other texts of Ibn Masarra, and that these texts, in turn, will prove, disprove, or correct the suggestions brought here.

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[13] Also relevant here is the place of the Throne in the thought of Dhū l-Nūn al-Ikhmīmī (d. 330/941); on this, and on its possible influence on Ibn Masarra, see Makki 1968, 155–62. On Ibn Masarra's possible connection to the thought of Dhū l-Nūn as well al-Nahrajūrī's, see Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Taʾrīkh*, 323–24.

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CHAPTER 5

AL-FĀRĀBĪ'S (D. 950) *ON THE ONE AND ONENESS*

Some Preliminary Remarks on Its Structure, Contents, and Theological Implications

DAMIEN JANOS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) is regarded as one of the foremost Arabic philosophers of the early period of Islamic civilization. Born around 256/870 into a family that was originally from Transoxania, he acquired his philosophical formation in the company of Syriac Christian thinkers and eventually settled in Baghdad, where he contributed in various crucial ways to the development of a philosophical curriculum in Arabic. He also spent time in Syria and Egypt, where, as in the ʿAbbasid capital, he taught a younger generation of Syriac philosophers. Referred to as "The Second Teacher" in the Islamic tradition, he was held in high esteem in particular for his commentaries on Aristotle and his mastery of the *Organon*. Al-Fārābī wrote extensively on logic, physics, and metaphysics, reshaping much of the late-antique philosophical legacy into a system that was intelligible to the Arabic audience of his day and that addressed some of the pressing social and spiritual issues that prevailed during this period. He established a synthesis of various scientific and philosophical trends that bridged the theoretical and practical disciplines and redefined the place of human beings in the world by explaining political and religious phenomena in light of cosmological and epistemological theories.

Al-Fārābī wrote different types of works, which can be broadly classified as follows: (*a*) propaedeutic and methodological works providing instruction on the philosophical curriculum and its method, particularly on points of logic; (*b*) commentaries, mostly on Aristotle; (*c*) short treatises on various specific and technical subjects; (*d*) philosophical compendia covering various topics in a systematic and integrated way;

(*e*) polemical works, mostly in defense of Aristotelian tenets. Perhaps the most famous works of the Farabian corpus are the two philosophical compendia, *The Principles of the Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City* (*Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*) and *The Principles of the Existents* (*Mabādiʾ l-mawjūdāt*), also known as *The Political Regime* (*al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*; I shall refer to them as al-Fārābī's "cosmological works" from now on), which cover a wide diversity of topics ranging from theology and cosmology to sublunary physics, psychology, and political theory.

The aim of the present chapter is to provide a preliminary analysis of some key features of a short and neglected treatise by al-Fārābī entitled *On the One and Oneness* (*Kitāb al-Wāḥid wa-l-waḥda*, henceforth *On the One*). In spite of its potential importance for our understanding of al-Fārābī's philosophy, this text has never been the object of a special analytical study and has been discussed only briefly and fleetingly in the secondary literature (see Walzer's comments in al-Fārābī, *Principles of the Opinions*, 339–42, 362; Vallat 2004, 64, 68, 79; Menn 2008, 91 n. 39; Menn 2012, 88–92; Janos 2012, 196–97; Rudolph 2012, 395, 430–31; Mushtak 1960 and Mahdi 1989 consist chiefly of an edition and/or translation of the text). There is therefore a strong desideratum to examine the style, structure, and contents of this work and to shed light on its relation to the rest of the Farabian corpus. This in turn would enable us to interpret its philosophical significance within the broader context of al-Fārābī's thought.

With this in mind, three questions in particular will orient the following study: (1) To what philosophical traditions and movements is this work indebted? (2) What are some of its main formal and doctrinal features? (3) And how do its contents fit in al-Fārābī's philosophical system? These are broad questions, and only preliminary insight can be provided here. Although short in length and technical in nature, *On the One* is at the same time representative of al-Fārābī's approach to philosophy and of his metaphysical program in particular. It deals with a topic of great importance to the Second Teacher, who, like many of his Greek forebears, tackled the issue of oneness and multiplicity in depth in his works. This neglected treatise may therefore serve as an entry point into some of the broader questions of his philosophy, while at the same time providing a glimpse into the state of contemporary research in Farabian studies.

5.2. General Presentation of the Work

Among the bio-bibliographers, Ibn al-Qifṭī (d. 646/1248) in *Taʾrīkh al-ḥukamāʾ* (279.9–10) and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270) in *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ* (139.8) both mention a *Kitāb al-Wāḥid wa-l-waḥda* in the long list of works by al-Fārābī that they provide. The work is furthermore cited by some later Arabic philosophers, including Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1138) and Averroes (d. 595/1198), and it is likely that Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (d. 974) and Avicenna (d. 427/1037) relied on it for their treatment of oneness in *The Discourse on Divine Unity* (*Maqāla fī l-tawḥīd*) and *The Cure* (*Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*) respectively, although they do not cite it directly. These authors take the Farabian authorship of this work for granted and thus lend additional weight to the evidence that can be found in the bio-bibliographic sources. As we will see below, an independent analysis of the treatise reveals that its contents and style are very much Farabian in nature and point to a high degree of overlap with his other works. Hence, the combined manuscript, bio-bibliographic, stylistic, and doctrinal evidence all decisively confirm the authenticity of the text.

On the One has been preserved in three manuscripts, all in the Ayasofya Library in Istanbul (MSS 3336, 4839, and 4853).[1] In the form in which it has reached us, this work reads like an independent treatise entirely devoted to the themes of unity and multiplicity that had so occupied and inspired the main protagonists of the Greek philosophical tradition, from Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle to Plotinus and Proclus. It is a relatively short treatise of approximately sixty-seven pages in the modern edition executed by Muhsin Mahdi. The text is written in a dry, concise, and technical style and organized into discrete sections. In MS 4854 the beginning of each section is marked out with red ink, although the partitioning and arrangement of the edited text into distinct parts and chapters was achieved by Mahdi and finds no support in the manuscript copy.

When approaching *On the One*, we are from the outset confronted with a cluster of textual and conceptual issues: (*a*) there are no clear pointers that enable us to securely date the work and situate it precisely vis-à-vis the rest of al-Fārābī's output, (*b*) it is unclear how its contents relate to al-Fārābī's other works, and (*c*) it is also unclear what its overarching metaphysical aim is, since the discussion begins and ends abruptly without an introduction or statement of purpose. These issues are compounded by the fact that *On the One* contains virtually no cross-references to the rest of the Farabian corpus. The following study constitutes merely a first step toward the resolution of these complex issues and is intended to further raise our attention to the philosophical relevance of its contents.

On the One appears to be fundamentally a systematic linguistic analysis of the various senses (*maʿānī*) and aspects (*anḥāʾ*) of "the one" (*al-wāḥid*) and "the multiple" (*al-kathīr*). Oneness and multiplicity are ambiguous or equivocal terms (*asmāʾ mushtaraka*) for al-Fārābī, and so it is the purpose of the work to clarify their intentional and extensional scope. However, in addition to this exercise in linguistic clarification al-Fārābī is also interested in exploring some of the metaphysical implications of these concepts, both in this very work and especially in other works that build on the results of *On the One*. In addressing the central philosophical theme of oneness and multiplicity, the treatise displays obvious thematic connections with the rest of the Farabian corpus, for al-Fārābī had tackled the subject of oneness in other works dealing with theology, cosmology, psychology, and logic. Moreover, *On the One* is closely related to the *Book of Particles* (*Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*), part of which is devoted to the analysis of specific metaphysical terms and particles. In fact, it is striking that these two works investigate what in al-Fārābī's mind are the most general metaphysical concepts, oneness and existence. In that sense, al-Fārābī's aim to clarify the semantic nuances of oneness in *On the One* is reminiscent of what he seeks to achieve in the *Book of Particles* with regard to "the existent," "thing," and "substance," which play an equally important role in his metaphysics. Given their common approach and purpose, it is not surprising that the two works share similar stylistic and formal characteristics and an identical division of the text into discrete units. The overlap in technical vocabulary between them is apparent from the samples in table 5.1.

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[1] According to Muhsin Mahdi, who published an edition of the Arabic text in 1989 by collating the three manuscripts, MS 4854 has preserved the best copy of al-Fārābī's treatise, and it is accordingly the one he used to improve upon the earlier editions of Hazim Mushtak and Hüseyin Atay (Mahdi 1989, English preface). Indeed, having consulted the Oxford thesis by Mushtak, I may confirm that, in spite of having the merit of being the earliest edition and still the only study exclusively dedicated to this work, both the edition and general discussion provided by Mushtak are undermined by corrupt passages that led the author to many conceptual misunderstandings and mistranslations. The present author was able to obtain electronic copies of MSS 4839 and 4854 thanks to the gracious help of Maroun Aouad. Although I have relied on Mahdi's edition and division of the text, I consulted the manuscript in instances where Mahdi's edition seemed problematic.

These passages are close in style and tenor, and they reflect a similar approach applied to the concepts of "the existent" and "the one." The stylistic commonality between the two works is furthermore reinforced by a set of terms and expressions that appears repeatedly in both of them: "the particular thing designated" (*al-mushār ilayhi*), "what is set apart by its quiddity" (*al-munḥāz bi-māhiyyatihi*), what exists "in the extramental world" (*fīmā khārij al-nafs*), and so on.

Table 5.1 Some textual parallels between *Book of Particles* and *On the One*

Book of Particles	*On the One*
" 'The existent' is an equivocal term that is said of all the categories" (*al-mawjūd ism mushtarak yuqālu ʿalā jamīʿ al-maqūlāt*) (115.15)	" 'The one' is said in various ways" (*al-wāḥid yuqālu ʿalā anḥāʾ kathīra)* (36.8)
	"Likewise it ['the one'] is said of all the categories" (*wa-ka-dhālika yuqālu ʿalā jamīʿ al-maqūlāt*) (51.11)
"Hence, 'the existent' is said with regard . . . to what is set apart by a certain quiddity outside the soul, whether it be conceived or not conceived" (*fa-l-mawjūd idhan yuqālu ʿalā . . . mā huwa munḥāz bi-māhiyyatin mā khārij al-nafs tuṣuwwirat aw lam tutaṣawwar*) (116.22–117.1)	" 'The one' is also said of what is set apart by its quiddity, whichever quiddity that may be . . . whether conceived or [existing] outside the soul" (*wa-ayḍan yuqālu l-wāḥid ʿalā l-munḥāz bi-māhiyyatihi, ayy māhiyya kānat . . . kānat mutaṣawwara aw kānat khārij al-nafs*) (51.5–7)
"And this is the meaning that Parmenides understood in connection with 'the non-existent' " (*wa hādhā l-maʿnā huwa alladhī fahima Barmānīdis min ghayr al-mawjud*) (128.18)	"And this is most likely the meaning of 'the one' that Parmenides had in mind when he stated that 'the existent is one' " (*wa hādhā l-maʿnā fīmā aḥsaba huwa alladhī kāna Barmānīdis fahimahu min maʿānī l-wāḥid fī qawlihi l-mawjud wā ḥid*) (8314–84.1)

The various formal and terminological parallels between the *Book of Particles* and *On the One*, combined with the converging conceptual aim of the two treatises, suggest that the two works were composed within a short interval. These points also raise the possibility that the two texts were once connected and even perhaps formed a continuous work that was later divided into two (Mahdi in al-Fārābī, *al-Ḥurūf*, 43; Menn 2008, 91 n. 39 regards *On the One* as complementing *Book of Particles*). The hypothesis that *On the One* originally formed part of the *Book of Particles* seems plausible, but it cannot be vindicated at the present time and to my knowledge finds no support in the manuscript evidence and in the primary sources in Arabic. In fact, it is possible that their composition was separated by a chronological gap and that al-Fārābī intended *On the One* to stand as an independent treatise, even though he may have composed it in the same spirit as, and as a companion piece to, the *Book of Particles*. Hence, the issue of whether these two works once formed a single continuous text should be left open for the time being.

5.3. *ON THE ONE* AND THE LATE-ANTIQUE GREEK AND EARLY ARABIC CONTEXTS

5.3.1. The Aristotelian Tradition on *Metaphysics*

Al-Fārābī's *On the One* is indebted to several philosophical traditions whose main characteristics should be quickly reviewed in order for this work to be properly contextualized. There are three contexts in particular I wish to emphasize here. According to the modern scholars who have discussed the treatise, *On the One* appears to be essentially an elaboration on some parts of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, especially Δ.6 and Iota.1 (see Mushtak 1960, 2, 27; Mahdi 1989, preface; Walzer in al-Fārābī, *Principles of the Opinions*, 339; and Rudolph 2012, 430). Moreover, the suggestion has been made that *On the One* is closely connected with *Book of Particles*, which is now regarded essentially as a Farabian elaboration on book Δ intended to clarify the metaphysical function of Arabic particles (Mahdi, preface; and Menn 2008, esp. 91 n. 39). In his monograph on al-Fārābī, Philippe Vallat suggests a link between *On the One* and book N of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, although he also proposes to connect this work with the Neoplatonic tradition on Plato's *Parmenides* (Vallat 2004, 78–80, and 15 n. 1). From the foregoing, we see that specific parts of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, notably book Δ.6, have repeatedly been identified as constituting the main philosophical model for al-Fārābī's *On the One*, although Vallat also emphasizes the potential importance of the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions.

It seems likely that Aristotle's seminal treatise constituted one of the main sources of inspiration for the composition of *On the One*. The very first sentence of the Arabic work, namely, that "the one may be said of things in different ways," has a typically Aristotelian ring to it and recalls Aristotle's own injunction to philosophers intent on investigating equivocal terms, such as "being" at *Metaphysics* Γ.2. Al-Fārābī regards "the one" as just such an equivocal term that requires elucidation (following Alexander of Aphrodisias, who in his *Commentary on Metaphysics* Δ.6 includes “the one” in the class of special equivocal terms or equivocals by reference by which he means that it possesses a primary sense and related derivative senses; see 241.3ff., 344.20ff., and note 7 in the commentary). Moreover, many of the senses of oneness discussed by al-Fārābī in his book are mentioned in the summary Aristotle provides in *Metaphysics* Δ.6. These include “the one” by accident, by number, by genus, by species, the one that is quantitatively indivisible, the one in continuity, in form, and in definition, and several other subsenses of the one. Finally, many of the examples used by al-Fārābī to illustrate his arguments could have been borrowed directly from Δ: they include objects of sense perception (parts of the human body, wooden objects, liquids such as water and wine, horses, and of course the usual human characters, which in the Arabic text are not Coriscus and Socrates, but rather Zayd and ʿAmr), as well as abstract things such as geometrical figures. This common set of examples shows that al-Fārābī not only derived some of his theories from the *Metaphysics*, but also followed the Aristotelian mode of exposition, which resorts frequently to concrete examples taken from everyday life. Even the dry, technical tenor of *On the One* recalls the Aristotelian style in book Δ.

More fundamentally, however, *On the One* needs to be read against the broader background of al-Fārābī’s conception of metaphysics, which is directly dependent on Aristotle’s. Following Aristotle, al-Fārābī believes metaphysics to be, among other things, an investigation into the most general concepts of reality, namely existence (*wujūd*) and oneness (*waḥda)*. These two most general or universal concepts are intricately related in al-Fārābī’s mind, since what possesses actual existence must also be one in a certain sense, be it only because it is set apart by a quiddity (*māhiyya*) and a special existence (*wujūd khāṣṣ*) that it alone possesses to the exclusion of all other beings. It is therefore hardly surprising that al-Fārābī devoted considerable space to these two concepts, especially in his *Book of Particles* (to “the existent” *al-mawjūd*) and in the present treatise to “the one” (*al-wāḥid*) (for al-Fārābī’s conception of metaphysics, see Bertolacci 2006, 65ff.).

Al-Fārābī’s understanding of how oneness fits in the metaphysical inquiry can be clarified further by a passage drawn from *On the Aims of Aristotle’s Metaphysics*. In this work al-Fārābī writes:

> Universal science studies what is common to all beings [like existence and oneness]. . . . The primary object of this science is absolute being and what is equivalent to it in universality, namely, the one. But since the knowledge of contrary correlatives (*mutaqābilāt*) is one, theoretical inquiry into privation and multiplicity is also included in this science. Then after examination of these subjects, [this science] inquires into matters which are as species to them, like the ten categories of an existent being, the species of the one [like the individual one, the specific one, the generic one, and the analogic one, and the subdivisions of each one of these], and similarly the species of privation and multiplicity. (Trans. in Gutas 2014, 273–274)

This passage of *On the Aims* shows that al-Fārābī, following Aristotle, regarded unity and multiplicity as forming part of the subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*) of the metaphysical discipline. Moreover, this discipline also encompasses the study of multiplicity, the opposite of unity, and the various subdivisions of unity and multiplicity, whose enumeration and clarification also represents a goal of this science. Although al-Fārābī begins to enumerate a few such subdivisions, he will do so much more thoroughly and comprehensively in *On the One*, whose purpose it is to engage in such analytical procedure. This passage of *On the Aims* therefore reads like a sketch of what al-Fārābī intended to achieve in *On the One* and anticipates the very purpose of this treatise.

5.3.2. The Neoplatonic Background: Al-Fārābī's Knowledge of Plato's *Parmenides*, Plotinus's *Enneads*, and Proclus's *Elements of Theology*

The hypothesis that works derived from the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions represented another source used by al-Fārābī both for the composition of this treatise and for conceiving how its contents fit in the rest of his philosophical system should be given some thought. Various compendia of the Platonic dialogues, especially those achieved by Galen, circulated in Baghdad during the ninth and tenth centuries, and we know in any case that al-Fārābī was familiar with the contents of several Platonic works, as is attested by his paraphrase of Plato's *Laws* and *The Philosophy of Plato*. More relevantly for our purposes, Plato's *Parmenides*, together with fragments from its late-antique commentaries, such as those by Porphyry and Proclus, may have been known to al-Fārābī (for information on the transmission of Plato's *Parmenides* in Arabic, chiefly through Galen's compendia, see Gutas 2012, 851 and 854). Given that this Platonic dialogue, in addition to broaching the subject of the Platonic Forms, is dedicated to a detailed investigation of how being, unity, and multiplicity relate to each other, its potential impact on the Second Teacher needs to be taken into account.

Although there is virtually no evidence pointing to al-Fārābī's knowledge of the Greek commentaries on *Parmenides*, there is on the other hand no doubt that he was directly acquainted with this work. Al-Fārābī mentions this Platonic dialogue on a few instances, most notably in *On Dialectic* (*Kitāb al-Jadal*), a work inspired by Aristotle's *Topics*, and *The Philosophy of Plato* (*Falsafat Aflāṭūn*), which consists of a brief and quite general overview of some of the main Platonic dialogues (see al-Fārābī, *al-Jadal*, 31.6ff., and *Philosophy*, 57). In both of these works, al-Fārābī describes the study of Plato's *Parmenides* as a valuable dialectical exercise conducive to developing students' skills in debate and philosophical thinking. This view, it should be noted, was also prevalent in some ancient philosophical circles, as can be seen from Proclus's commentary on this work.[2] In addition, al-Fārābī also paraphrases the historical Parmenides in both

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[2] Proclus, *Commentaire sur le "Parménide" de Platon*, book 1, 648.1 ff. See also Vallat 2004, 63–64, who mentions Elias's commentary on *Prior Analytics*. It is nevertheless unclear what sources al-Fārābī relied on to develop this interpretation of the Platonic dialogue.

Book of Particles (128.18) and *On the One* (83.14–84.1) in what appears to be two closely related citations concerning Parmenides's doctrine of being. Although it cannot be ascertained to what extent his knowledge of Parmenides's philosophy may have been derived from the Platonic dialogue itself, as opposed to doxographies or other material translated into Arabic, it does show his acquaintance with some of the basic doctrines of the Greek thinker (see Vallat 2004, 63–83, for these citations and the Neoplatonic background).

At any rate, Plato's *Parmenides* and al-Fārābī's *On the One* at first glance share little in common. The approach endorsed by Plato in the *Parmenides*, which is grounded in paradox and a highly abstract dialectic, is not reproduced in al-Fārābī's treatise, which in comparison appears quite straightforwardly descriptive and expository. Moreover, while the *Parmenides* is aporetic and may have been designed to culminate with the reader's perplexity, al-Fārābī's treatise is sober and analytical. But perhaps the most salient distinction between these two works is that while Plato is interested in discussing oneness and multiplicity in the realm of the Forms and the philosophical implications that would follow if absolute oneness were to exist (or rather if Being were one), al-Fārābī is committed primarily to clarifying how concrete individual existents can be said to be one and multiple. In other words, while Plato discusses these concepts in themselves and qua Forms, al-Fārābī is intent on disentangling the various senses in which oneness and multiplicity can be predicated of substances and accidents (in the Aristotelian sense). In this respect, the major issue pertaining to at least the first part of the Parmenides, that is, oneness and multiplicity qua separate Forms, and the question of whether these Forms participate in each other or not, is not relevant to al-Fārābī's work; and quite understandably so, since he rejected the Platonic theory of the Forms. With regard to *On the One* specifically, then, it appears at first glance that whatever al-Fārābī knew of *Parmenides* played an insignificant role in shaping the bulk of his discussion.

Yet in spite of these major divergences in tenor, method, and doctrine, there is a real sense in which the central query of the *Parmenides* relates to al-Fārābī's views on oneness when construed within the broader framework of his cosmology and theology. The *Parmenides* discusses not only the absolute one, but also the relation between oneness and plurality. Likewise, al-Fārābī is interested in investigating the relation of oneness and plurality, explaining how things can be both one and multiple in great detail, in a way that Aristotle does not in *Metaphysics*.[3] Furthermore, one of the fundamental investigations of the *Parmenides*, that is, whether absolute oneness exists as such and what is its relation to the multiplicity of being, finds a parallel in al-Fārābī's philosophy, since he sometimes describes God as the "True One" and the source of all oneness and existence in the world (as in al-Fārābī, *Agreement*, 133; *Aphorisms*, section 37, 52–54), although he seems to endorse a different position in other works.[4] It is with regard to the theological and ontological implications of *On the One* explored in some of al-Fārābī's other works that the Platonic dialogue may have contributed to shaping his views, possibly through the intermediary of the *Neoplatonica arabica*; but even then, more detailed research is necessary to settle this point.[5]

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[3] More specifically, al-Fārābī's view that the same object can be said to be both one and multiple recalls some passages of *Parmenides* (129a-130a) where Socrates argues that the same thing can be both like and unlike and one and many. But the difference, of course, is that Socrates's statements imply that these objects participate simultaneously in different Forms, whereas al-Fārābī rejects the theory of the Forms and regards oneness and multiplicity merely as attributes or concomitants of the actual existence of substances.

More directly relevant to the structure and contents of *On the One* are four propositions that can be found in the first part of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*. They are the following:

Prop. 1: "Every multiplicity participates (*metechei*) in unity."
Prop. 2: "Everything that participates in unity is both one and not-one."
Prop. 4: "All that is unified is other than the One itself."
Prop. 5: "Every multiplicity is posterior to unity."

Proclus's approach and philosophical language are characteristic of his Platonic allegiance, as the notion of "participation" in particular testifies. For underlying Proclus's account is the theory of the Forms and, in the particular case of unity, the framework elaborated in *Parmenides*. Such fundamental Platonic doctrines are not found in al-Fārābī's works. But Proclus's theorization of how unity relates to multiplicity was recast in a set of Arabic Neoplatonic adaptations, with which al-Fārābī had firsthand acquaintance: *Theology of Aristotle* (*Uthūlūjiyā Arisṭāṭālīs*, essentially an adaptation of Plotinus's *Enneads* books IV–VI), *The Epistle on Divine Knowledge* (*Risāla fī l-ʿilm al-ilāhī*), and the *Book of Pure Good* (*Kitāb fī l-Khayr al-maḥḍ*, an adaptation of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*). Among other theses, these works argue that multiplicity is from the one and caused by the one, that each existing thing is both one and multiple (except for God, who is pure oneness), and that oneness is prior to multiplicity (Badawī 1977a, 85.3–4, 148.8 ff., 134.5–11, 177–78), ideas which can be traced back to the Proclean propositions outlined above. That these Arabic Neoplatonic works had an impact on al-Fārābī's conception of oneness is shown by a passage in *The Agreement of the Views of the Two Philosophers, the Divine Plato and Aristotle* (*Kitāb al-Jamʿ bayna raʾyay al-ḥakīmayn Aflāṭūn al-ilāhī wa-Arisṭūṭālīs*), which also stands as a programmatic statement concerning the structure and contents of *On the One*:

> Aristotle also showed in the *Theology of Aristotle* that the one (*al-wāḥid*) exists in every multiplicity, because every multiplicity in which [the one] does not exist

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[4] For a recent interpretation of the concepts of existence and oneness in al-Fārābī's late cosmological works, see Menn 2012, 88–92. Due to its complexity and importance, the question of how God's oneness relates to the oneness of other things cannot be addressed here for reasons of space. I am presently working on a study that will address this question in depth, particularly with regard to al-Fārābī's relation to al-Kindī and more broadly to the Greek and Arabic Neoplatonic sources.

[5] According to Vallat (2004, 68–76), al-Fārābī may have been influenced by Porphyry's theology and by the Porphyrian interpretation of *Parmenides* as it filtered through some of the Arabic Neoplatonic works.

> would be absolutely infinite. . . . He then shows that everything in which the one (*al-wāḥid*) exists in this world is both one and not one in various respects. If it is not truly one, then the one exists in it, the one is other than it, and it is other than the one. (al-Fārābī, *Agreement*, 131–33)

The context in which this extract appears is proper to *The Agreement*. There the author puts forth a cosmological theory whose aim is to show that Aristotle convincingly addressed many of the issues that lie at the core of religious traditions, such as creation or divine knowledge. Regardless of this point, however, this account is clearly inspired by ideas al-Fārābī derived from *The Book of Pure Good* and *Theology of Aristotle*, which he here attributes to Aristotle. Moreover, this excerpt is remarkable in that it foreshadows key aspects dealt with in *On the One*. Indeed, al-Fārābī argues in *On the One* that (1) everything that is multiple is also one in a certain sense; (2) the multiple derives from the one and is posterior to the one; and (3) some things may be one without containing any multiplicity whatsoever. These ideas, as expressed in propositions 1, 2, 4, and 5 of *Elements*, and in various sections of the Arabic versions of this text, underpin al-Fārābī's discussion in parts II.6, III.9, and IV.10 of *On the One*, among many others, where he seeks to elucidate the relation between "the one" and "the multiple." There are therefore obvious parallels between the Greek and Arabic Neoplatonic material and the way al-Fārābī regards the relation of oneness and multiplicity in *One the One*, even though his treatment of this issue is highly theoretical and the broader cosmological and theological background is not explicitly spelled out in this work.

In brief, *On the One* appears to be deeply embedded in and informed by the philosophical culture of the time and to expand in specific directions the discourse on oneness sketched in various Aristotelian and Neoplatonic works that were accessible to al-Fārābī. But while the Aristotelian affiliations of the work are beyond doubt, the results of this brief overview with regard to the Platonic and Neoplatonic affiliations of *On the One* are only mildly conclusive. As the quotations and the evidence collected above show, al-Fārābī evidently knew something about Parmenides's doctrines and the eponymous Platonic dialogue. He refers to this philosopher in his works and summarizes (what in his eyes constitutes) the gist of the dialogue, although he does not discuss its contents in any detail and limits his remarks to the dialectical and didactic value of the work. In contrast, the Arabic material associated with Plotinus and Proclus is more directly relevant. Although these Platonic and Neoplatonic sources do not appear at first glance to have had a significant impact on the composition of *On the One*, they likely contributed to al-Fārābī's theoretical understanding of how oneness relates to multiplicity and motivated him to dedicate the bulk of his treatises to this issue. More concretely, the Neoplatonic works may have played a crucial role in shaping al-Fārābī's project to incorporate oneness and multiplicity in the framework of his theology and causal cosmology.

5.3.3. Al-Kindī and the Religious Polemics on Divine Oneness

For this sketch of the intellectual background of *On the One* to be complete, it is necessary to refer briefly to the genre of Arabic works composed on the theme of divine unity, often in the context of interfaith polemics and theological controversies. From at least the late eighth century onward, various polemical treatises were redacted on the subject of God's oneness, often with the express aim of either strengthening or undermining the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Christians and Muslims of this period debated over the respective merits of their creed and theology and about whether the Trinity could be reconciled with a sound theory of divine unity. They sometimes showed considerable logical acumen and argumentative aptitude in doing so, resorting in the process to philosophical ideas and arguments, as can be seen in Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's *On the Affirmation of Divine Oneness*. One outstanding figure in this development was the philosopher al-Kindī, who was himself engaged in such polemics with Christians and other religious groups and devoted much time to the theme of divine oneness in chapters 3 and 4 his work *On First Philosophy*. Al-Kindī construes metaphysics chiefly in terms of theology, and he regards oneness as occupying a central place in his theological system. The main theses defended by al-Kindī are as follows:

1. "The one" (*al-wāḥid*), or oneness, is predicated of genus, species, individual, specific difference, property, and accident.
2. All of these kinds of oneness are predicated accidentally of things, not essentially, and they are effects (caused by an exterior agent).
3. Hence, an exterior cause or agent is needed to provide these things with oneness.
4. This exterior cause is God, who alone possesses oneness essentially and is the source of all oneness in the world.

These, in a nutshell, are the main points articulated in al-Kindī's book with regard to oneness. It is easy to perceive the overarching theological frame within which they are inserted, and in this respect al-Kindī was clearly relying on the *Neoplatonica arabica* when elaborating his views. He was especially receptive to the ideas from *Book of Pure Good* mentioned above concerning the absolute Oneness of God and how oneness is communicated to the rest of the existents (Adamson 2002, and 2007, 47–57). Indeed, these texts describe God as absolute being and oneness and as the source of all oneness in the world in a manner very reminiscent of Kindī's theology.

This general philosophical and polemical context relates to al-Fārābī's treatise in two ways. First, al-Fārābī's *On the One* bears an ambiguous relation to al-Kindī's *On First Philosophy* and his conception of oneness, which it may have implicitly addressed. Stephen Menn has suggested recently that al-Fārābī may have composed *On the One* and *Book of Particles* partly as an attempt to discredit al-Kindī's doctrines and provide a philosophical alternative to the Kindīan metaphysical, and more specifically ontological, project (Menn 2008, 90–96; 2012, 88–92). Since al-Kindī's work represents the most significant philosophical precedent to al-Fārābī's treatise in the early Arabic tradition, it is clear that the relation between the two works needs to be taken into account and elucidated in future studies on the topic. Second, and although this question also requires further research, *On the One* almost certainly had an impact on the subsequent development of polemical and theological works devoted to the issue of divine oneness, starting perhaps with the treatise by Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (one of al-Fārābī's students) mentioned above (see Lizzini 2003 and 2015). Although highly technical and abstract in nature, al-Fārābī's treatise could be used as an eristic or argumentative aid for the redaction of polemical treatises on the theme of divine oneness and the Trinity, given the insight it provides on the relation of oneness and multiplicity.

5.4. The Place of *On the One* in al-Fārābī's Corpus and Thought

5.4.1. The Structure and Contents of *On the One*: Some Notable Points

It is remarkable that, in the form in which it has come down to us, al-Fārābī's *On the One* is an independent work *exclusively* devoted to a linguistic and logical discussion of unity and plurality. In that sense it stands as a rare case in the Arabic tradition, since such undertakings are usually integrated within a larger philosophical work or articulated in the context of a theological or polemical discourse (this is the case of Avicenna's and al-Kindī's discussions of oneness in *The Cure* and *On First Philosophy* respectively). From the very outset, then, it is clear that *On the One*, while indebted to, and participating in, the various philosophical and textual strands discussed above, possesses an idiosyncratic structure and form.

Mahdi's edition divides the treatise into five main parts or sections, all of which are aimed at disentangling the various senses of "the one" and "the multiple" and elucidating the various kinds of relations between these concepts. Part I investigates the main senses of "the one," such as "the one" in genus (*al-wāḥid bi-l-jins*), in species (*bi-l-nawʿ*), in continuity (*al-muttaṣil*), in substrate (*bi-l-mawḍūʿ*), in number (*bi-l-ʿadad*), the one said of that which is divisible (*munqasim*), and, of crucial importance, the one that is said of what is set apart by its quiddity, to which I will return below. Al-Fārābī then proceeds in Part II to a discussion of "the multiple" (*al-kathīr*), and subsequently in Parts III and IV to an investigation of the relation between unity and multiplicity, that is to say, to how things can be said (or not) to be both one and multiple. At the very end of the treatise, in Part V, he provides a short summary of the senses of oneness surveyed throughout the work that mostly harks back to the first section (see the English outline provided in the appendix). Hence, at a fundamental level, the work explores in an exhaustive manner the various kinds of *relations* that exist between oneness and multiplicity, in terms of both inclusion (how some senses of the one and the multiple are co-extensive or depend on one another) and exclusion (how some senses of the one preclude the existence of the multiple). In that sense, it is striking that al-Fārābī's treatise attributes at least equal importance to multiplicity as to unity, which is discussed especially in Parts II, III, and IV, but which in fact underlies the entire treatise, including Part I.

Several key features of al-Fārābī's classification and analysis of these concepts deserve special emphasis, as they will be relevant to the next section of this chapter.

1. Unlike Aristotle, al-Fārābī does not emphasize the distinction between the one "by accident" and the one "in itself" or "by essence," although he does uphold a particular interpretation of how oneness relates to quiddity, as we shall see below. This point is important insofar as Aristotle and some of his commentators, such as Alexander (in his *Commentary on Metaphysics* Δ.6), open their analysis of oneness with this fundamental dichotomy. Al-Kindī had also seized upon this distinction to develop his theological arguments in *On First Philosophy*, particularly to buttress his claim that God alone is one "in truth" or "in essence" (*bi-l-ḥaqīqa*) (al-Kindī, *On First Philosophy*, 160–62). Al-Fārābī has a different take on this issue and on how to structure his treatise, which suggests a departure on his part vis-à-vis both this Peripatetic tradition and al-Kindī.

2. At least one sense of "the one" can be predicated both of extramental and of mental things, as is clear from the following passage:

> "The one" is also said of that which is set apart by its quiddity (*al-munḥāz bi-māhiyyatihi*)—whichever quiddity that may be, divisible or indivisible, conceived [in the human soul, *mutaṣawwara*] or [existing] outside the soul. (al-Fārābī, *On the One*, 51.5–7)

In fact, according to al-Fārābī, both the one and the multiple apply to and may be predicated of a wide variety of things, ranging from extramental physical and immaterial beings to mental things such as concepts, syllogisms, and mathematical objects (see point 7 below). In other words, for al-Fārābī all existing things (*al-mawjūdāt*), whether in the mind or outside the mind, possess a oneness proper to them.

3. Everything that is multiple is also one in a certain sense, which explains why most of the senses of "the one" al-Fārābī reviews are predicated of a multiplicity or of something that also contains a multiplicity (I.1–3, II.7, IV.10, etc.). Conversely, most things that are one are also multiple. An exception is the crucial sense of "the one said of what is set apart by its quiddity" (*al-wāḥid yuqālu ʿalā l-munḥāz bi-māhiyyatihi*) (I.4), which might be said of what is not multiple. This point is explicitly stated (if not fully articulated) at II.7.C, when al-Fārābī writes that "what is set apart by [its] quiddity may be multiple or not multiple" (al-Fārābī 1989, 74.11–12), but it may also be inferred from other sections of the work (see also point 6 below).

4. In al-Fārābī's view, the various senses of the one are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but may combine and overlap (for instance, the one qua continuous can also be one because it shares a common substrate or species with other beings). This is all the more apparent since, at a fundamental level, all existents may be said to be one because they possess a quiddity that sets them apart from other beings, and, in the case of bodies, because they possess a finite limit or boundary. These are meanings of the one these beings share with many other things and which may be predicated alongside other senses of the one. This explains why al-Fārābī describes "the one" as an equivocal term that possesses various aspects (*anḥāʾ*) and senses (*maʿānī*): they can apply to different beings in different ways, but many of them can also apply to the same being.

5. Following Aristotle in *Metaphysics* Δ.6, 1017a2ff., al-Fārābī broadly construes the multiple as the opposite of the one (II.5.2 and III.8). But some of the senses of the one enumerated by al-Fārābī are not necessarily opposed by the multiple. In other words, even though multiplicity is always opposed to oneness, not all kinds of oneness have an opposite (*muqābil*) and a corresponding multiplicity. This is particularly true of "the one" said in three ways: (*a*) the one said of what is set apart by its quiddity, (*b*) the one said of the body that is set apart by a certain limit; and (*c*) what does not have a sharer (or participant) in that by which it is described (II.5.A).

6. Even though oneness and multiplicity are almost always found together in particular existents (except in the First, whose special case is discussed below), al-Fārābī is intent on arguing that multiplicity is derived from (*ḥādith ʿan*) and follows oneness. The priority of the one over the multiple and the derivative nature of the latter are discussed in sections II.6 and III.9 of the treatise. What al-Fārābī has in mind is a logical priority or precedence, since any statement about the multiple logically and conceptually implies a prior statement about the one, be it only because "the multiple" can only be predicated of a thing that is one in the sense of being set apart by its quiddity and of possessing a special existence. In addition to the priority of these fundamental senses of oneness, there are many senses of the multiple that depend on a oneness prior to them (for instance, the one in number is prior to the multiple in number). It is in this sense that the multiple may be said to arise from or derive from the one and be posterior to it. Points 3, 5, and 6 above and the relation between the one and the multiple can be generally summarized by figure 5.1. It should be noted that these various relations are not

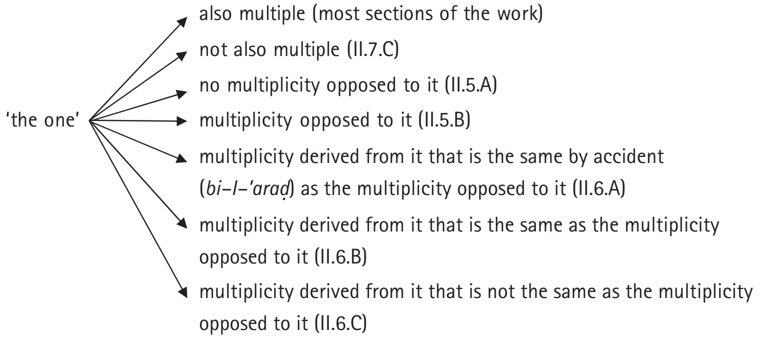
'the one'
also multiple (most sections of the work)
not also multiple (II.7.C)
no multiplicity opposed to it (II.5.A)
multiplicity opposed to it (II.5.B)
multiplicity derived from it that is the same by accident (*bi–l–'araḍ*) as the multiplicity opposed to it (II.6.A)
multiplicity derived from it that is the same as the multiplicity opposed to it (II.6.B)
multiplicity derived from it that is not the same as the multiplicity opposed to it (II.6.C)

FIGURE 5.1 Schematic representation of 'the one' and 'the multiple'.

mutually exclusive; for instance, some things that are one may have both a multiplicity opposed to them and a kind of multiplicity that arises from them that is not the same as the multiplicity opposed to them. On the other hand, some things can be one, but neither (*a*) be multiple in any sense, nor (*b*) have a multiplicity opposed to them or deriving from them. As we will see below, this postulate has important ramifications in al-Fārābī's philosophy.

7. Finally, al-Fārābī intends his analysis of the senses of the one to apply primarily to things (*ashyāʾ*) that fall in the categories, as is clear from the rich array of physical examples he relies on in the course of his exposition. As we saw in point 2, these things consist of a wide variety of existents that exist either in the extramental world or in the human mind. Indeed, it is remarkable that al-Fārābī's treatise focuses primarily on these various kinds of physical existents as opposed to the immaterial existents he postulates in his cosmological treatises. However, he does intend some of his comments on the one and the multiple to apply also to things that lie outside of the categories. This is evidenced by several passages of *On the One*, such as when al-Fārābī writes that some senses of the one apply to physical things "and of other things outside the categories if they exist" (*On the One*, 51.11–12) and "to the things separated from matter, if they exist" (*On the One*, 52.1–2). We also know a posteriori that al-Fārābī relied on the concepts of oneness and multiplicity to define the immaterial intellects of his cosmology, which he regards as being one and multiple in some way: they are one and simple in that they are intellectual, immaterial beings, but they possess an intelligible multiplicity (because they think the First *and* their essence). This prevents them from being completely simple and one (especially when their essence is compared to that of the First).

Even if we limit ourselves to this bare outline and to these fundamental points, it becomes quite clear at once that the philosophical motivations underlying the treatise as a whole go beyond that of a mere expository scheme and what we can find in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, even though the latter obviously provided one of the starting points for al-Fārābī's reflection on this subject. We saw that many of the senses of oneness that al-Fārābī investigates are traceable to Δ.6. And it is true that the very end of Δ.6 may be taken as a starting point for al-Fārābī's examination of multiplicity, since Aristotle writes there (1017a3–5) that "many will have meanings opposite to those of one." But this assertion can hardly be taken as a model for al-Fārābī's very thorough and detailed investigation of the senses of plurality and of their relation to unity, which in fact constitutes the bulk of his treatise. Moreover there are several fundamental issues of interest to al-Fārābī that are not even broached in this section of *Metaphysics*. Three points in particular examined by al-Fārābī are conspicuous elaborations on Aristotle and find no clear precedent in the Aristotelian corpus: (*a*) the sense of the one as "that which is set apart by its quiddity"; (*b*) the argument that this sense of the one may have no opposite (*muqābil*) and no corresponding multiplicity; and (*c*) the notion that the multiple is derived or arises from (*ḥādith ʿan*) the one. These three points highlight a more general difference in approach between the two thinkers. Aristotle broadly defines multiplicity as the opposite of oneness, erecting a seemingly symmetrical account of these concepts in *Metaphysics*. Al-Fārābī in contrast maintains that these concepts are not symmetrical, because the one need not have a corresponding multiplicity, neither in the sense that it is multiple, nor in the sense that a multiplicity is opposed to it or derived from it.

It is with regard to these specific points that *On the One* seems to bear some connection with the Neoplatonic tradition of late antiquity. Proclus, for instance, explores similar questions at the beginning of *Elements of Theology*, where he argues that oneness precedes multiplicity and that the latter is derived from the former. Moreover, Proclus's comments also apply, or perhaps were meant to apply chiefly, to intelligible unity and multiplicity. These issues then reappear in the Arabic Neoplatonic material, and together they constitute a restricted yet arguably crucial aspect of the background of al-Fārābī's discussion in *On the One*. This connection between al-Fārābī and Neoplatonism is especially relevant when the theological and cosmological dimensions of his philosophical system are taken into account, for there he establishes the ontological priority of oneness over multiplicity in a way reminiscent of Neoplatonic cosmology and theology. In the last section of this study, I examine some of the theological implications *On the One* has within the broader framework of al-Fārābī's philosophy.

5.4.2. Some Theological Implications of *On the One*

Several points al-Fārābī establishes in *On the One* were undoubtedly intended to have theological bearing, especially when they are transposed to his exposition of cosmology and theology in his other works. More specifically, the theses that (*a*) "the one" precedes "the multiple" and the latter derives from the former; (*b*) some senses of "the one" apply to both material and immaterial beings alike; (*c*) "the one" need not be multiple or have something multiple opposed to it; and (*d*) "oneness-in-quiddity" sets a thing apart from other things, regardless of what that quiddity is, all have theological ramifications that echo in the rest of the Farabian corpus. As we shall see, they contributed to the articulation of some of his fundamental doctrines about God's special quiddity and oneness. In what follows, I will concentrate only on those strictly theological issues and leave out the complicated question of how the oneness of God relates to the oneness of the other beings, which I plan to tackle in depth in another study.

In order to gain further insight into this topic, I propose to focus on the sense of oneness related to quiddity, which al-Fārābī describes as "'the one' said of that which is set apart by its quiddity," and to which I will henceforth refer as "the one-in-quiddity" or "oneness-in-quiddity." This is arguably one of the most important ideas al-Fārābī broaches, because it applies to all existents, regardless of their nature and status on the ontological spectrum. Due to the importance of this sense of oneness, I provide a translation of the key passage:

> "The one" (*al-wāḥid*) is also said of that which is set apart by its quiddity (*al-munḥāz bi-māhiyyatihi*)—whichever quiddity that may be, divisible or indivisible, conceived [by the human soul] or [existing] outside the soul. This is [the thing] set apart in

> its having a share of existence (*al-munḥāz bi-mā lahu qisṭ al-wujūd*) and [the thing] set apart in its share of existence (*wa-l-munḥāz bi-qisṭihi min al-wujūd*). It is in the nature of "the one" said in this sense to accompany the existent (*an yusāwiqa l-mawjūd*), like the thing (*al-shayʾ*), and there is no difference between saying "all things" (*kull shayʾ min al-ashyāʾ*) and saying "each one" (*kull wāḥid*). Likewise, it is said of all the categories, of the particular thing that is designated (*al-mushār ilayhi*), and of other things—if they exist—outside the categories (*khārija ʿan al-maqūlāt*). (al-Fārābī, *On the One*, 51.5–12)

This passage establishes a close connection between key Farabian metaphysical concepts: "the one" (*al-wāḥid*), "the existent" (*al-mawjūd*), quiddity (*māhiyya*), and "the thing" (*al-shayʾ*), all of which played an important role later on in Avicenna's philosophy as well (Wisnovsky 2003). How these terms and concepts are related in al-Fārābī's metaphysics is a very complex issue that cannot be explored in detail in this chapter (for some insight, see Wisnovsky 2003, 145 ff., 219 ff.; and Menn 2008, 2012, 88–89, who also cites and discusses the above passage). What nevertheless emerges clearly from this passage is that, according to al-Fārābī, there is a kind of oneness, or a sense of the one, that is intrinsically attached to both the existence and the quiddity of each thing. Although al-Fārābī does not formulate this view explicitly, his statement that oneness accompanies quiddity and the existent (*yusāwiqu l-mawjūd*) could be construed in the sense that oneness is an attribute and a necessary concomitant of existing quiddity, in a manner not dissimilar to the way that Avicenna was later to articulate this idea (Avicenna, *Metaphysics*, 21.5–31, 156.2–3). It appears, however, that al-Fārābī maintained a more narrow relation or even an identity between the existence and oneness of existing things and quiddities, so that whatever exists is sensu stricto also one in the sense that its specific existence (*wujūd khāṣṣ*) is its oneness.[6] This implies that this sense of oneness applies to the quiddity of a particular thing only insofar as this quiddity is actually existing or is an existent (*mawjūd*). According to al-Fārābī, this is true to the extent that, instead of referring to the existents as "things," we can also refer to them as "ones," as in "each one [of these things or existents]" (*kull wāḥid*).

At any rate, this sense of "the one-in-quiddity," which appears to be a Farabian innovation, represents a foundation on which al-Fārābī elaborates some crucial aspects of his theological system. There are indeed several implications associated with this meaning of the one. Perhaps the most important is that this sense of the one applies to immaterial and material existents alike. This point was alluded to above, and it is further emphasized in another passage of *On the One* when al-Fārābī writes: "As for that which is set apart by a certain quiddity, it may be a body or incorporeal, but it is general [or universal, *ʿāmm*] like 'the thing' or 'the existent'" (al-Fārābī, *On the One*, 78.1–2). In light of this, immaterial existents such as the separate intellects, while removed from matter, have a quiddity that sets them apart from the other things and endows them with oneness. It should be noted that this sense of oneness does not prevent multiplicity from existing conjointly in the immaterial beings. We know from al-Fārābī's other works that the immaterial existents are caused and therefore endowed with a complex and defective nature. More precisely, they possess multiplicity in their essence as a result of their twofold intellection: of the First and of their own self or essence. Yet perhaps the most direct sense in which they may be said to be one is with regard to their immaterial quiddity, which is unique and distinguished from the others by virtue of its special relation to the First.

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[6] Strictly speaking, Avicenna regards oneness (and multiplicity)—and even existence (*wujūd*) itself—as necessary concomitants (*lawāzim*) of the quiddity (*māhiyya*) and as attributes that are not constitutive (*ghayr muqawwima*) of quiddity. Quiddity in itself is neither one, nor many, nor even existing, and it is considered by the mind in abstraction of these notions. This means that quiddity is—at the very least, conceptually—prior to both oneness and existence, and that a logical, conceptual, or essential sequentiality is introduced in the relationship of these various concepts. Al-Fārābī's choice of the term "to accompany" (*sāwaqa*), in contrast, does not convey entailment or posteriority, and he seems, unlike Avicenna, to regard these terms as being conceptually co-extensive and synchronic. Consequently, while "special existence" (*wujūd khāṣṣ*) for Avicenna clearly refers to the state of the quiddity in itself (and only that), it overlaps in al-Fārābī's philosophy with the notion of the actual and concrete existence of the quiddity; this special existence, according to al-Fārābī, is for a quiddity to actually exist in a particular way, to have a "share" of actual existence. In brief, quiddity, actual existence, special existence, and oneness seem to be interconnected in al-Fārābī's system in a way they are not in Avicenna.

What applies to the concrete, material existents and to the immaterial beings such as the separate intellects also applies to God in a primary or eminent way. Indeed, this sense of oneness is applied to all quiddities, "whichever quiddity that may be," as al-Fārābī specifies. If this oneness-in-quiddity is a quality that all existents possess by virtue of their quiddity and existence, then the First Cause must also be one in this sense, since God exists in an eminent and most perfect way. Evidence that al-Fārābī expressly applied this sense of "the one-in-quiddity" to God or the First Cause can be found in *The Principles of the Opinions* and *The Principles of the Existents*. These two works were written toward the end of al-Fārābī's life and constitute a philosophical overview or summa of various aspects of his philosophy. Their first part contains a discussion of theology or God's essence and an exposition of the various other beings, both immaterial and material, that make up the intelligible world and the heavens. They then proceed to examining the sublunary existents, human physiology and psychology, ethics, and politics. Now, as Menn already noticed (2012, 88–89) while in *On the One* the connection between "the one that is set apart by its quiddity" and God is only vaguely alluded to when al-Fārābī mentions the beings that transcend the categories, it is explicitly formulated in *The Principles of the Opinions* and *The Principles of the Existents*:

> On account of this, Its [the First's] existence (*wujūduhu*), by which It is set apart (*yanḥāzu*) from all the other existents, cannot be other than that by which It is an existent in Itself (*fī dhātihi mawjūd*). Therefore Its distinction (*inḥiyāzuhu*) from everything else is through a oneness (*bi-waḥdatin*) that is Its essence (*dhātihi*). And one of the meanings of oneness (*aḥad maʿānī l-waḥda*) is the specific existence (*al-wujūd al-khāṣṣ*) by which every existent is set apart from another, and it is by virtue of this that each existent is called "one," in the sense that it has an existence proper to it alone. This particular meaning [of oneness] accompanies the existent

> (*yusāwiqu l-mawjūd*). In this regard, the First is also one, and more deserving of that name and meaning than anything else that is called one. (al-Fārābī, *Principles of the Existents*, 44.14–45.3, translated in McGinnis and Reisman 2007, 89, translation revised)

The parallels and similarities between this passage and *On the One* are striking. One notices, to begin with, the use of a common vocabulary, with specific technical terms appearing in both accounts: the verb *inḥāza*, "to be distinguished, or set apart," and the accompanying term *munḥāz*, "set apart"; the common claim that " 'the one' accompanies the existent" (*al-wāḥid yusāwiqu l-mawjūd*); and of course the realization that "the one" has various meanings (*maʿānī*). But it is the theological contents that are crucial here. Al-Fārābī asserts that God is set apart by His special existence and oneness, implying the unique oneness-in-quiddity that God possesses to the exclusion of all the other beings. That we are here dealing with the same sense of "the one-in-quiddity" developed in *On the One* is confirmed when al-Fārābī explains that "every existent is set apart from another, and it is by virtue of this that each existent is called 'one.' "

Hence, not only can certain specific passages from *On the One* be easily harmonized with al-Fārābī's theology; they also seem to announce the very doctrines that he discusses in his other works. It becomes clearer in light of this excerpt why al-Fārābī would be so keen about exploring the sense of oneness related to quiddity. To begin with, it enables him to posit a kind of divine oneness that belongs to God alone, since this oneness would be essentially identical with God's special quiddity and existence and would therefore belong to no other being than Him. The theory that every quiddity possesses its own, special, and proper oneness by virtue of its very existence means that God as well possesses a special and unique kind of oneness by virtue of His special existence and quiddity.

But, referring back to our previous overview of *On the One*, there are two other crucial theological implications associated with "oneness-in-quiddity." According to al-Fārābī, oneness in quiddity (*a*) need not be predicated of something multiple, and (*b*) need not have a multiplicity that is opposed to it. I adduce some excerpts from *On the One* that illustrate these points:

> As for what is set apart by its quiddity, it may be multiple or it may not be multiple. (al-Fārābī, *On the One*, 74.11–12)

And:

> However, some things cannot have any multiplicity whatsoever, such as what has an absolutely indivisible quiddity. (al-Fārābī, *On the One*, 90.12–13)

And finally:

> What is not one is opposed to what is one. The ways of negating the one are as numerous as the ways of affirming the one. Nevertheless, among the things that negate the one is what possesses a potentiality of multiplicity opposed to the one. But not everything that is called one is opposed by a certain multiplicity. Among these things [not opposed by multiplicity] is the one said of a thing that is set apart by its quiddity. (al-Fārābī, *On the One*, 57.12–58.4)

These points are also theologically relevant for al-Fārābī. First, they establish the thesis that God's special quiddity need not at the same time combine with or be marked by any kind of multiplicity whatsoever. In other words, this meaning of the one is perfectly compatible with al-Fārābī's views concerning the oneness and simplicity of God. Moreover, al-Fārābī also agrees with mainstream *kalām* schools regarding the idea that God does not have a contrary and opponent (*ḍidd, muʿānid*) by which, or in contrast to which, he would be defined, failing which case we would end up with a dualistic theory of the divine. This also means that the multiplicity that actually exists in the world cannot be regarded as a corollary or derivative effect of the divine essence that would be opposed to it in any way. Finally, since "the one-in-quiddity" need not be multiple, it is clear that at least another crucial sense of "the one" will be connected with it, namely, the one said of that which is indivisible (*ghayr munqasim*).

Unsurprisingly, all of these points are developed in al-Fārābī's mature cosmological treatises. He argues at length that God is one (*wāḥid*) in the sense of being simple (*basīṭ*) and indivisible (*ghayr munqasim*) (al-Fārābī, *Principles of the Opinions*, 66–68); that He possesses no partner and contrary (*ḍidd*) (62–66); and that His causation of other beings and the world does not in any way affect, add to, or perfect His quiddity, oneness, and being (90). This indicates that the crucial sense of "oneness-in-quiddity" possesses various corollaries that are explored in al-Fārābī's other works. In light of this, it is not surprising that al-Fārābī considers this sense of "the one," that is, what is set apart by its quiddity, as "the most deserving of being called the one" (*On the One*, 89.4–5) and that he makes it the pivotal concept of his theology and metaphysics. This is the sense of "the one" par excellence, and it enjoys a semantic priority over the other senses of oneness.[7]

It is interesting to note that whereas "the one-in-quiddity" can be applied to God positively or in a cataphatic manner, the sense of "the one" qua indivisible that can be predicated of God with respect to many things such as His qualities or knowledge is most adequately formulated through a set of negative statements (God's essence is not divisible "in parts," or "in quantity," or "into various accidents," or "according to various terms, statements, or intelligibles," He has "no sharer, participant, or equal," etc.). The apophatic potential of many senses of "the one" discussed in *On the One* reminds one of the negative theology al-Fārābī employs in his cosmological works (see, for instance, the opening section on theology in al-Fārābī, *Principles of the Opinions*, 56–89). Although al-Fārābī does not assert this explicitly in *On the One*, "oneness-in-quiddity" seems to be the only kind of oneness that pertains positively to the divine essence—in that sense its theological significance cannot be overestimated. Indeed, most of the other kinds of oneness imply or presuppose matter or compositeness or multiplicity of some kind and in that sense do not apply to the divine essence or can be predicated of It only negatively.

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[7] In the case of God, this quiddity is His perfect, unitary existence, which leads us to conclude that God's oneness, essence, and existence can only be regarded as one thing. It would be worthwhile to trace al-Fārābī's influence in the later Arabic debate on this issue. The parallels with Avicenna's theology regarding the identity of essence and existence in God are obvious and would deserve a full treatment. This conflation of quiddity, existence, and oneness was by no means unproblematic in the later Arabic tradition, and al-Ghazālī for one in his famous attack against the philosophers articulated in *The Refutation of the Philosophers* pinpointed this threefold identification as a philosophical absurdity (al-Ghazālī, *Incoherence*, Discussion 5). Al-Ghazālī argued that it is unreasonable to conflate quiddity and existence in God, and he further also distinguished the divine reality, *ḥaqīqa*, as a third concept applying to God and distinct from existence.

Finally, one example discussed in *On the One* is particularly valuable for its theological underpinnings (55.4–6): al-Fārābī observes that some people (*qawm*) believe that thought, thinker, and object of thought (*ʿaql, ʿāqil*, and *maʿqūl*) constitute a plurality of terms and concepts that nevertheless does not refer to an actual plurality in the divine intellect. In other words the plurality that can be expressed in speech or imagined does not correspond to an existing plurality in the act of intellection itself. Al-Fārābī was certainly aware of the theological implications of this point, since the issue of divine knowledge and of God's thought represented a crucial subject of debate and discussion during this period. The crux of the problem was whether God's knowledge (whether of particulars or universals) necessarily implies some kind of division, change, or multiplicity in the divine essence. In *Selected Aphorisms* (*Fuṣūl muntazaʿa*, section 86, 89–91) al-Fārābī relates the views of three groups on this issue (God knows only Himself, He knows only universal things, and He knows all things including the particulars), which were widespread during his time in theological and philosophical circles. Although he refrains from providing a clear account of his position in this work, he does excoriate those who are of the opinion that God is omniscient of all changing, particular things. Al-Fārābī is more expansive of his views on the topic of divine cognition and intellection in *The Principles of the Opinions* (70–73). Building on *On the One*, he explains there that "it is impossible that each part of the explanation of the meaning of the First should denote one of the parts by which the First's substance is constituted," a postulate he applies to the verbal and conceptual distinction between the thinking subject, the object of thought, and the act of thought. This leads him to conclude that God is "thought, object of thought, and thinker, all this being one essence and one indivisible substance" (70.14–15), just as "the fact that It [the First or God] knows and that it is knowable and that it is knowledge refers to one essence and one substance" (72.10–11). These things can be divided verbally and conceptually in the human mind, but in God they refer only to a single indivisible meaning or notion (*maʿnan wāḥidan*) (72.5).

5.5. CONCLUSION

The passages from *The Principles of the Opinions* and *The Principles of the Existents* discussed above seem to furnish theological instantiations of the more general theory of oneness laid out in *On the One*, which, it should be remembered, was not formulated with respect to God alone, but to beings in general. The comparative analysis conducted above has yielded additional evidence to the effect that *On the One* is connected in very significant ways with al-Fārābī's other philosophical treatises, as Vallat and Menn had already noticed. It is clear that *On the One*, while probably not expressly written for a theological purpose, can nevertheless contribute considerably to the elaboration of al-Fārābī's theological and metaphysical system by explicating and clarifying some senses of oneness relevant to these disciplines, and in ways that we can only begin to unveil. In this particular case, it provides a meaning of oneness that can be applied to God in connection with His special quiddity and existence. It is perhaps chiefly in this regard that the treatise, in addition to its purely philosophical significance, should also be situated within the tradition of apologetic and polemical works in Arabic focusing on the issue of divine oneness and, in the case of the Christians, of the Trinity. Its relation to other works dealing with this theme, such as Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's *Discourse on Divine Unity*, deserves closer scrutiny (for a recent probe, see Lizzini 2015). In any case, al-Fārābī's *On the One* occupies a central place in his corpus. It is connected doctrinally and textually with his other works and contributes to shedding valuable light on his conception of oneness as a crucial metaphysical and theological concept.

APPENDIX THE CONTENTS OF *ON THE ONE AND ONENESS*

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CHAPTER 6

YAḤYĀ B. ʿADĪ'S (D. 974) *KITĀB TAHDHĪB AL-AKHLĀQ*

SIDNEY H. GRIFFITH

6.1

To judge by the twenty-some surviving manuscript copies, and an equal number of printed editions of all or part of the *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* usually attributed to the tenth-century Christian philosopher of Baghdad Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (893–974), this intriguing essay on virtue ethics enjoyed a wide popularity among Arabic-speaking readers, both Christian and Muslim, well into modern times. Christian scribes have over the centuries consistently attributed the text to Yaḥyā, while among Muslims the same essay has sometimes circulated under the names of prominent Muslim writers such as Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868), Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Haytham (d. 430/1041), and even Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), to name only the most famous of them. The consensus of recent scholarship favors the attribution of the text to Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (see Khalil Samir 1974, 1979), albeit that with just a few exceptions it is topically and thematically somewhat at odds with the rigorously logical, philosophical, and theological tenor of most of the items listed in the bibliographies of Yaḥyā's works, both medieval and modern, a feature of the work that led the most recent bibliographer, Gerhard Endress, to the rather careful conclusion that "there is no intrinsic evidence against the authorship of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī" (1977, 84; see the updated list of Yaḥyā's works in Endress 2012b; see also the list of newly discovered treatises and letters by Yaḥyā in Wisnovsky 2012).

Beyond the matter of authorship, even the name of this popular treatise is subject to some uncertainty. The now customary title does not appear on the earliest list of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī's works, nor is the work itself included in recent editions of his philosophical texts. There is mention in the older bibliographies of a work by Yaḥyā entitled *Siyāsat al-nafs*, "The Governance of the Soul," a phrase that does in fact occur in the text, but so too does the phrase *tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, "The Reformation of Morals" (see, e.g., Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 4.8 and 4.22, 70 and 82). Over the centuries of its transmission, copyists seem gradually to have adopted the latter phrase as the work's standard title, perhaps due to the fact that the phrase came to be considered the stock title for a treatise on virtue ethics. Consider, for example, the work of the Muslim author and younger contemporary of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh (320/932–421/1030), who, like Yaḥyā, spent much of his scholarly life in Baghdad (see Endress 2012a; Arkoun 1982), and who also wrote a treatise on virtue ethics under the same title, albeit that Miskawayh's work was of an altogether different, more Platonic character (Zurayk 1966; Zurayk 1968; Arkoun 1988; see also the sketch of Miskawayh's ethical thought in Endress 2012a, 232–38). While Miskawayh never mentions Yaḥyā, or his treatise on acquiring virtues, according to Mohammed Arkoun, Miskawayh was trained by students of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, and so he must have known of Yaḥyā's work (Arkoun 1982, 97–98).

Recent editions of the Arabic text and scholarly introductions devoted to the study of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* began with the publication of the Cambridge PhD dissertation of Dr. Naji al-Takriti, which includes a critical edition of the text together with a study of the sources of Yaḥyā's ideas and modes of expression, as well as a comparison of his thought with that of his predecessors and contemporaries and with the Islamic intellectual tradition more generally (al-Takriti 1978). In Dr. al-Takriti's judgment, "Perhaps the most important feature of *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* is that it was one of the earliest books on Islamic ethical philosophy" (al-Takriti 1978, 222). It is notable that this Muslim scholar is willing to speak of the Christian philosopher's work, properly attributed as one dealing with "Islamic ethical philosophy." Some years later, Marie-Thérèse Urvoy also published a critical edition of the text, together with a thoroughgoing introductory study and a French translation of the whole work, the first translation of it into a Western language (Urvoy 1991; the author refers to her work on this text at numerous junctures). In 2002 Sidney H. Griffith published an introductory essay on Yaḥyā's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* along with an English translation of Samir Khalil Samir's critical edition of the Arabic text, with the Arabic and English on facing pages (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*; see also the original Arabic edition, Kussaim 1994).

6.2

Given the undoubtedly Hellenistic flavor of the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* as a whole, it would nevertheless be a mistake to think of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī's text as more or less a translation of a preexisting, originally Greek composition, as some scholars have supposed. For example, even recognizing the work's distinctiveness, Richard Walzer, ever the reductive source critic, was nevertheless moved to say of the structure of the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* that "this scheme probably depends ultimately on some lost pre-neoplatonic Greek original" (Walzer 1960, 328). But as a matter of fact, as scholars have recognized, there are at least three predominant frames of reference behind the work: pre-Islamic Arabic tradition as refracted in early Islamic discourse, the Persian tradition of "mirrors for princes," along with the admittedly dominant Greek philosophical traditions (al-Takriti 1978; Urvoy 1991 *passim* in the introductory material). So it is clear that in the ensemble the work is not simply a conventional re-presentation of already familiar themes. Rather, there is a distinctive originality evident in it that led Marie Thérèse Urvoy to speak of the "syncretism of Ibn ʿAdī" that goes much farther than just the sum of the ideas of his sources (Urvoy 1991, 43). And she went on to say that Yaḥyā's work has a markedly different character even from the ethical compositions of later Muslim writers, who never mention his name or his work, not even Miskawayh, who wrote his own *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* in the same city not fifty years later, as we have seen. In other words, one might just as well say that Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, writing in the idiom of his own day and using the scholarly resources available to him, composed an original work with its own purposes, in view of the social circumstances of his own era. Endress has recently suggested that one of the concurrent resources available to Yaḥyā at the time of his writing the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* was the catalog of virtues that appears in the section dealing with ethics in his contemporary, Ibn Farīghūn's compendium of the sciences, called *Jawāmiʿ al-ʿulūm* (Endress 2012b, 324). However this might have been, it is clear, as we shall see, that like his master al-Fārābī, Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī was concerned not only with individual moral development but also, at least ideally, with the commonweal of the religiously plural polity that was the Abbasid caliphate in his time.

Unlike many of his other works, most of which are relentlessly logical, philosophical, or theological in tone and style, the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* seems to be addressed to a more general readership, indeed to anyone who "might attain perfection by the reformation of his morals," as Yaḥyā puts it (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 1.2, 4/5). He seems to have intended the brief essay, actually no more than a pamphlet of fifty some pages in most editions, to serve on one level as a philosophically inspired, self-help manual for anyone seeking moral perfection. On another level it is clear that he also envisions an ideal society governed by virtuous leaders. What is more, unlike in others of his works, here Yaḥyā makes his case without explicit reference to Christian ethical principles, albeit that he encourages regular religious observance; he seems in fact to have envisioned a religiously plural readership, as we shall see.

6.3

The topical outline of the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* features five major subjects: the definition of a moral quality; the tripartite soul; the virtues and vices; the way of reformation; and the portrait of the perfect man.[1]

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[1] For a fuller discussion of the five major subjects, see the introduction by Griffith in Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, xxviii–xli. See also Griffith 2003; Yamamoto 2012.

6.3.1. The Definition of a Moral Quality

Following the usage of earlier Arabic translators of Greek philosophical terms, Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī uses the Arabic word *khulq, khuluq* (pl. *akhlāq*) in the sense in which Greek writers before him used the term ἦθος (pl. ἤθη) to mean a moral character or quality, a character trait, or, in the plural, simply morals or ethics. He defines the term after the definition given by the Greco-Roman physician/philosopher Galen (129–ca. 210) as follows: "A moral quality (*al-khuluq*) is a state (*ḥāl*) proper to the soul, in which a man performs his actions without deliberation or study" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 1.5, 8).[2]

According to Yaḥyā, the problem is that while moral qualities may be good or bad, inborn or acquired, in fact evil overcomes most people in the world, and so there is a need in society for kings, laws, and systems of ethics to encourage the acquisition and practice of the good moral qualities and the extirpation of the bad ones. But by definition, moral qualities are states proper to the soul, so Yaḥyā must consider how they relate to the soul.

6.3.2. The Tripartite Soul

Following the philosophical tradition to which he was heir, Yaḥyā distinguishes three "faculties" (*quwā*) in the human soul, and he maintains that the soul itself, with these faculties, is "the necessary cause for the differentiation of the moral qualities." And he goes on to say in the same place: "The soul has three faculties, and they are also named souls: the appetitive soul, the irascible soul, and the rational soul. All of the moral qualities emanate from these faculties" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 2.1, 14).

Yaḥyā proceeds to give a brief characterization of the inclinations and instincts of each of the three "souls" or "faculties." Along the way one learns that the moral qualities (*al-akhlāq*) inhere in the souls as "habits" (*al-ʿādāt*), and that "the necessary cause for the differentiation of people's habits . . . [is] the differentiation of the states (*aḥwāl*) of the soul" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 2.5, 18), that is to say, the differentiation of the moral qualities as characterized by each of the three faculties of the soul, since moral qualities are themselves states of the soul. Just as the faculties of the soul are appetitive, irascible, and rational, so are the moral qualities and their corresponding habits, as states of the soul, characterized as appetitive, irascible, and rational. Some of these moral qualities and habits are good and commendable, and some of them are evil and to be avoided. The good ones are "virtues" (*faḍāʾil*, sing. *faḍīla*) and the evil ones are "vices" (*radhāʾil*, sing. *radhīla*).

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[2] The definition reflects the Arabic translation of Galen's lost Greek treatise Περὶ ἠθῶν. See Kraus 1937, 25. The English translation of the Arabic translation of Galen's definition is "A trait of character is a state of the soul that induces a man to perform the actions of the soul without consideration or precise knowledge." Mattock 1972, 236.

According to Yaḥyā, it is by means of the rational soul that man has the ability to reform and to refine the appetitive and the irascible faculties. The process of reformation and refinement under the guidance of the rational soul is what allows the one who practices it to become "someone of reformed morals" (*al-muhadhdhab al-akhlāq*), "someone confirmed in humanity (*insāniyya*), someone who is deservedly a natural leader" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 1:3,4; 2.15, 6 and 26). Yaḥyā regularly calls such a reformed person a "perfect man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*) or a "complete man" (*al-insān at-tāmm*).

6.3.3. Virtues and Vices

Yaḥyā provides a catalog of twenty virtues and twenty vices, each of which he defines and describes in considerable detail. It is notable that his catalog does not follow the Greek philosophical practice of listing the virtues under the headings of the four cardinal virtues. While Yaḥyā's list is idiosyncratic, the virtues and vices he lists and discusses can also be found discussed in much the same terms by other writers to whom he clearly owes a debt, such as Galen, al-Fārābī, and perhaps al-Rāzī, not to mention Aristotle and the Platonic tradition. There are also parallels to be found with Persian ethical traditions and even the lore of the ancient Arabs (see in this connection the parallels and their sources discussed by Urvoy 1991, 27–38, and al-Takriti 1978, 234–39). But when all is said and done, Yaḥyā's list is singular. The closest analogue so far found are the lists of virtues and vices included in the section on personal ethics in the work of a fourth-/tenth-century contemporary of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, Ibn Farīghūn's *Jawāmiʿ al-ʿulūm*, as mentioned above (see Ibn Farīghūn, *Compendium*, 73–85). Ibn Farīghūn's lists, which have yet to be systematically studied, are differently arranged albeit that they mention many of the same vices and virtues. Like Yaḥyā, Ibn Farīghūn lists remedies for the vices, and he pays special attention to the requirements of leaders and kings. But it is as yet unclear if Yaḥyā owes a debt to Ibn Farīghūn or vice versa, or if the two contemporaries are independently drawing on traditions current at the time in manuals for secretaries and court officials, or in the popular mirrors for princes.

A remarkable feature of the discussion of the virtues and vices is Yaḥyā's practice, after having defined each one of them as a moral quality, of making distinctions in terms of their commendability or abhorrence and repugnance by reference to the social status of the persons who might possess them. In this connection he distinguishes in particular between kings and "leaders" (*ar-ruʾasāʾ*) or "prominent people" (*al-ʿuẓamāʾ*) on the one hand, and ordinary people, or lower-class people, on the other hand. According to Yaḥyā, a moral quality may be more or less commendable according to the social rank of the person who acquires it and more or less reprehensible on the basis of the same consideration. And he distinguishes four moral qualities that for this reason cannot be simply listed among either the virtues or vices. They are love of honor, love of pomp and splendor, overcompensation for praise, and renunciation (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 3.42–45, 58–64). For some they are virtues, for others they are vices, depending on their roles in society; kings and leaders of people, for example, cannot be renunciants and at the same time effectively fulfill their civil responsibilities, while renunciants cannot fulfill their vocations concomitantly with the cultivation of a love of honor, pomp, and splendor. Yaḥyā's concern for the right conduct of the ruling classes is evident here, as well as his concern for a meaningful place in society for scholars and religious leaders, for whom, as we shall see, he thinks a spirit of renunciation and asceticism is appropriate.

6.3.4. The Way of Reformation

Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī's program for the reformation of morals essentially consists in the cultivation of the virtues pertinent to one's state in life and the extirpation of the vices. It is a program that involves subjecting the appetitive and the irascible souls and their faculties to the governing control of the rational soul. The problem is, as Yaḥyā explains, that people often do not take the trouble to examine their faults, and so they go unaddressed. Or, as he points out, the ordinary person is wont to think that people vary only in terms of money and possessions rather than in terms of virtue. Yaḥyā avers that money only provides social status and economic power, and he claims that so far is it from enhancing virtue, it may even play a role in exposing and promoting one's vices by providing the means for indulging them (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 4.1–7, 66–72). So for instilling the rational control of the appetitive and the irascible souls, Yaḥyā recommends keeping the objective of the virtue to be acquired constantly in mind as well as the repulsive quality of the vices that would otherwise characterize a person's habitual conduct. He suggests that one frequent the company of the best and brightest people so as to emulate their practice. He counsels against intoxication, listening to music, and gluttony at some length. He commends constant vigilance and mindfulness of the virtuous goal to be achieved. He recommends reading books as a significant part of the process of acquiring virtue. He says, "One must be continually studying books on morality and deportment as well as accounts of ascetics, monks, hermits, and pious people" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 4.11, 72–74). To do so is for Yaḥyā the indispensable part of advancing in what he calls the "rational sciences" (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*), the cultivation of which are necessary for the strengthening of the rational soul. He says,

> When one studies the rational sciences, refines his study of them, examines the books on morality and deportment, and lingers over them, his soul will awaken, take cognizance of its appetites, recover from its indolence, perceive its virtues, and reject its vices. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 4.23, 82–84)

In the end, for Yaḥyā, the program for acquiring virtues and extirpating vices, for making the virtues habitual, and for suppressing the troubling powers of the appetitive and the irascible souls is "to improve the rational soul, to empower it, to embellish it with virtues, refinement, and good deeds." He calls this program "a tool for self-management and a workable vehicle of practice." Its purpose is to provide that discernment of good and bad habits which is based on the acquisition of the "rational sciences" and the "refinement of one's critical thinking" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 4.25–26, 86). The end in view is the perfect man, the complete human being.

6.3.5. The Perfect Man

Yaḥyā says, "The complete human being is one whom virtue does not bypass, whom vice does not disfigure. . . . It is the angels he resembles more than he resembles men" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 5.2, 92). Yaḥyā advises the one who would seek perfection as follows:

> To direct his attention to the study of the exact sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥaqīqiyya*); to make it his goal to grasp the quiddities of existing things, to disclose their causes and occasions, and to search out their final ends and purposes. He shall not pause in his labor at any particular end without giving some consideration to what is beyond that end. He shall make it his badge of honor, night and day, to read books on morals, to scrutinize books of biographies and of policies. He shall devote himself to implementing what virtuous people have bidden to be implemented and what the sages who have gone before have advised to be made habitual. He shall also acquire a modicum of the discipline of grammar and rhetoric and be endowed with a measure of eloquence and oratorical felicity. He shall always frequent the sessions (*majālis*) of scholars and sages and continually associate with modest and abstinent people. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 5.4, 94; see Raad 2003)

On the face of it, this program goes beyond the effort simply to acquire virtues and dispel vices; it is effectively a blueprint for living the life of a philosopher. Yaḥyā speaks of it as the cultivation of "humanity" (*al-insāniyya*), becoming a perfect man, a man in full, one who would on this basis come habitually to love all people. He uses the term "humanity" in much the same way as did his master al-Fārābī, who used the term "in the sense of the quality that human beings have in common, or human nature; it also signifies being truly human, in the sense of realizing the end or perfection of man qua man, often synonymous with the exercise of reason" (Kraemer 1986, 10 n. 14). Yaḥyā says,

> Men are a single tribe (*qabīl*), related to one another; humanity (*al-insāniyya*) unites them. The adornment of the divine power is in all of them and in each one of them, and it is the rational soul. By means of this soul man becomes man. It is the nobler of the two parts of man, which are the soul and the body. So man in his true being is the rational soul, and it is a single substance (*jawhar*) in all men. All men in their true being are a single thing, but they are many in persons (*al-ashkhāṣ*). Since their souls are one, and love is only in the soul, all of them must show affection for one another and love one another. This is a natural disposition in men as long as the irascible soul does not lead them on. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 5.14–15, 106)

This inclusive line of thinking seems to have prompted Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī to commend humane behavior in terms that one can only describe as interreligious in character. That is to say, he intermingles typically Christian and Muslim vocabulary when he speaks of his real heroes of humanity, scholars (*ahl al-ʿilm*), monks (*ar-ruhbān*), and ascetics (*al-zuhhād*). For example, when he speaks of renunciation (*al-zuhd*) as a moral quality he says that it is especially good for "scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ*), monks (*ar-ruhbān*), religious leaders, orators, preachers, and whoever gives people an interest in eternal life" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 3.45, 62). He says that "what is to be considered good for them is clothing of hair and coarse material, traveling on foot, obscurity, attendance at churches and mosques and so forth, abhorrence for luxurious living" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 3.43, 60).

But Yaḥyā is also concerned in this treatise with society and its leaders. And he is well aware that the virtues fit for scholars and ascetics are not appropriate for kings and princes. For example, he says explicitly that the pursuit of the virtue of renunciation is not appropriate for kings and leaders:

> For when a king makes his practice of renunciation public, he becomes deficient. The reason is that his reign achieves its full purpose only with the collection of money and goods, and the accumulation of them, so that he might defend his realm with them, conserve its assets, and come to the aid of his subjects. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 3.45, 62)

Such a concern means that kings and leaders have all the inducements to pleasure and vice at their command, and as a matter of fact, according to Yaḥyā, they are not always or even often perfect men (see Hatem 1985). Nevertheless he says of them:

> The most successful of them, when his soul aspires to human fulfillment and yearns for authentic sovereignty, knows that a king is the most worthy to become the most complete person of his time, more virtuous than his officers and subjects. So it should be easy for him to disengage from evil appetites and to forgo vile pleasures. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 5.6, 96–98)

But when all is said and done, even with respect to kings and princes, Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī's thoughts return to his beloved scholars and ascetics. And he says of kings that after consolidating their power,

> They should give to scholars according to their classes, they should assign them salaries from their own private monies, and they should reward anyone who perseveres in knowledge and refinement. They should deal kindly with the weak and the poor, and they should search out the strangers and the alienated. They should be solicitous for ascetics and devout people, and they should allot them proportionately a share of their goods and their flocks. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 5.11, 102)

For all his concern for the " 'perfect man" and the commonweal of society at large, along with virtuous kings and princes, Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī nevertheless envisioned the "complete man" as one who cultivated the virtues and extirpated the vices in pursuit of the ascetic ideal. It is a feature of his moral philosophy that came to full expression in his promotion of celibacy for anyone who would seek human perfection.

6.4

Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī seriously espoused the idea that the unmarried, single life is the best state for one who would pursue what he called, as we shall see, "godly wisdom and true science." It became a constant point at issue between Yaḥyā and his Muslim interlocutors, who, like him, esteemed "humanity" and the good life. The discussion focused on the issue of the practice of the virtue of "continence" (*al-ʿiffa*), especially in the realm of sexuality and procreation. Among the philosophers, both Christian and Muslim, there was an ongoing debate about the degree of sexual abstinence that was appropriate for those seriously interested in pursuing the philosophical life. In the *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, Yaḥyā defined the virtue very generally. He wrote of it as follows:

> It is the soul's control of the appetites, and the constraint of them to be satisfied with what furnishes the body with the means of subsistence and preserves its health and no more. It is also the avoidance of intemperance, the curtailment of pleasures, and the endeavor to be moderate (*al-iʿtidāl*). Furthermore, the appetites to which one is restricted should be indulged in a commendable manner, agreeable with their satisfaction, in moments of indispensable need. They should be indulged according to a measure; no more than what is needed, no less than what safeguards soul and strength. This situation is the goal of abstinence. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Reformation*, 3.2, 28–30)

In another work, Yaḥyā spelled out his position more specifically in regard to the degree of abstinence he thought requisite for the "perfect man" in the realm of sexuality and procreation. It is a composite, unfinished text in the form in which it has survived. While its modern editor has called it a "Treatise on Continence," in light of its contents one might more accurately call it a treatise "On Sexual Abstinence and the Philosophical Life" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Traité*; cf. also Griffith 2006). It is unique among Yaḥyā's works in that we have it in an unfinished state, incomplete both textually and intellectually, almost as if it were a work in progress, still in the process of circulating among his conversation partners, Christian and Muslim, awaiting the resolution of significant criticisms of the thesis he defends. The discussion concerns the value of abstaining from seeking to procreate altogether on the part of one who seeks to live wisely and how he should best manage his sexual drives. The composite treatise is made up of three parts: an initial essay in which Yaḥyā argues that seekers of "true science and godly wisdom" should ideally abstain from seeking to procreate; a selection of criticisms and questions Yaḥyā assembled from notes made by presumably Muslim or other readers of the essay, along with three follow-up questions of his own sent back to the readers; and finally a copy of his interlocutors' replies to his questions, along with Yaḥyā's rebuttal of the readers' answers to them. The composite work affords the modern reader a rare insight into the processes of interreligious, philosophical colloquy in Baghdad in the mid-fourth/tenth century, whereby a text would be circulated for comment and rebuttal, and eventually returned to its author.

In this work Yaḥyā sets out to defend the traditional Christian view that the celibate life has a higher moral value than married life, with all its inevitable cares and distractions occasioned by the presence of wives and children (see the discussion of Druart 2008). From the outset it is clear that already in the initial essay, Yaḥyā is addressing the objections of adversaries. He mounts arguments against the objections that lifelong celibacy is detestable to God, who created the means of human propagation; that the refusal of progeny is wrong because existence is better than nonexistence; that such an abstention is a rejection of God's bountiful goodness and hence loathsome to him; and finally that increasing human existence is good and to reject it is inimical to God. Being a logician by profession, Yaḥyā's first step is to say of his adversaries' positions that "all their syllogisms inevitably comprise false premises" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Traité*, 9.2, 16). And he goes on at some length to identify the fallacies. But his principal point is to argue that celibacy, which entails benefits for all of society, is not meant for everyone because not everyone can undertake it without harm to himself; it is a practice "to which necessity pushes whoever has the capacity for it and intends to do it" (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Traité*, 12.6, 17). And such a person by definition is one bent upon the pursuit of true science and godly wisdom. One notices that Yaḥyā's stipulation that celibacy be taken up only by someone who could practice it without harm to himself is in harmony with the condition he set down for the right practice of abstinence in the *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* quoted above, namely that it should preserve the body's health and no more, according to due measure and no more than is needed.

The readers of Yaḥyā's initial treatise on continence were not convinced by his arguments. In due course his interlocutor introduces the relevance of the maxim "Virtue stands in the middle," and he argues that it applies to the practice of the virtues of abstinence and continence. Yaḥyā himself had specified in the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* that the virtue of abstinence should be practiced concomitantly with the endeavor to be moderate (*al-iʿtidāl*). But in defense of his position regarding the legitimacy and even the necessity of the practice of lifelong celibacy, at least for those capable of it without bodily harm to themselves, he lays down six conditions regarding the intention of any seeker of human perfection who would in his view legitimately be engaged in the propagation of the human species. He says,

> Any act of procreation which fails to move toward giving birth to a prophet, or to a purely honest man, or to an eminent physician, or a just king, or which would free one from distress or save one from falling into an illness is a vice. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Traité*, 102.4, 48)

Yaḥyā elaborated this principle on the basis of his consideration of ideas he shared with other neoplatonizing Aristotelians in his milieu, as the present writer has argued elsewhere (Griffith 2006, 319–32). What is notable here as he carries on with his argument in support of celibacy is his insistence that the exercise of moderation (*al-iʿtidāl*) he advocates in regard to the virtue of abstinence is not to be predicated of the exercise of the appetitive or irascible faculties in themselves, but is to be predicated of the human being who controls the actions of the two lower faculties with his mind; moderation is a function of the rational soul. On this basis Yaḥyā states his position as follows:

> The most virtuous way of life is to spend one's time gaining knowledge, to devote oneself to it according to one's ability, and not to be concerned with consorting with a wife, nor with having children, unless it would be to achieve one of the six purposes we have already prescribed. It is to spend what goods one has by the labor of others for one's own well-being and nourishment, without which one could not maintain one's life in a manner which would suffice for devoting one's time to gaining knowledge. It is to spend the remainder on whatever would help one to achieve the maximum of knowledge, such as books and teachers and whatever else follows the same course, without being concerned to seek offspring, save for the six purposes. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Traité*, 120.4–7, 57)

In Yaḥyā's view, the six purposes or conditions that would legitimate a philosopher's engagement in the married life and the procreation of children are dictated by reason. And while he supports this contention by reference to his reading of the lives of the philosophers of old (Plato and Aristotle), in counterpoint to his adversaries' understanding of their example, he also cites the example of Christ. He argues that since Christ and his companions possessed the virtue of continence to perfection, one cannot then logically argue that lifelong celibacy and abstention from procreation are incompatible with this virtue. In a bid for interreligious conviction, he phrases this claim in terms that would resonate with both Christians and Muslims (see Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Traité*, 130.10, 62). Nevertheless there is clearly a measure of special pleading in this matter; Yaḥyā seems desperately to want to bring the traditional Christian practice of celibacy in line with the rational principles governing the cultivation of virtue and the extirpation of vice laid down in the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*; it is an ancient Christian ideal translated into the Islamic milieu and phrased in the idiom of the current moral philosophy in Arabic.

In the end, Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī concludes his colloquy with his interlocutors on sexual abstinence and the philosophical life by reconfirming his fundamental dedication to the moral philosophy and virtue ethics he articulated in his more well-known treatise. Addressing his reader, he writes:

> The truth is, may God grant you strength and perseverance, that the virtue of man by means of which he is a man, is but wisdom (*al-ḥikma*) alone. That is because it is the virtue after which all the other virtues in him follow. When he has it to perfection, the perfection of right self-management redounds to him. And the health of the soul consists solely in his mind's and his soul's mastery, which is its perfection, over the remaining two Faculties. I mean the concupiscent faculty and the irascible faculty,

> and the mind's guidance of the two of them, with the result that they are motivated only toward what it motivates the two of them, so they do only what it prompts them to do. (Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, *Traité,* 132.4–7, 62)

6.5

It is tempting to think of Yaḥyā's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* as a textbook of the sort called for in the *Epistle on What Ought to Precede the Study of Philosophy*, often attributed to his teacher al-Fārābī. There one finds the following paragraph, virtually a brief description of what Yaḥyā wrote:

> Before studying philosophy one must reform the character traits of the appetitive soul in order that there will only be truly virtuous appetite, rather than a desire which is falsely believed to be virtuous, such as pleasure or the love of domination. This is obtained by means of character reformation not only in words but also in deeds. Then, one will reform one's rational soul in order that it understands the way of truth by means of which one is safe from error and from being deceived. This obtained by schooling in the science of demonstration. (Quoted from Druart 1997, 410)

But for all his devotion to philosophy and to the cultivation of reason, one suspects that Yaḥyā's purposes were not narrowly academic, nor were they limited to channeling the works of Plato, Aristotle, and their commentators to an Arabic-speaking readership. There is every reason to believe that he was among the philosophers of his time who were concerned to philosophize in support of their religious convictions. Modern historians of philosophy in Arabic have sometimes turned a baleful eye on such use of philosophy by religious thinkers in early Islamic times. These historians prefer to think of philosophy in capital letters as a pure, almost ideal discipline, confined solely to the realm of reason, unsullied with any other, particularly religious concerns on the part of Arabic-speaking scholars. They prefer to think of philosophically inspired religious and ethical texts as exercises in *adab*, or *kalām*, but never as *falsafa* (see, e.g., Gutas 2002, 2009). This attitude was certainly not that of the relentless logician Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, who was keen to cultivate philosophy both for its own sake and as a medium through which to commend virtue, right religion, and a humane polity, within the framework of his own religious tradition, not least in view of the fact that in the Abbasid Baghdad of his day, society had become religiously plural and the scholars of each community were called upon to commend the credibility of their own traditions to any and all who would follow the way of reason (see in this connection the thoughtful essay by Endress [1990]).

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CHAPTER 7

IBN SĪNĀ (D. 428/1037)

Metaphysics of the Shifāʾ

AMOS BERTOLACCI

7.1. Date of Composition, and Overview of Ibn Sīnā's Life and Works

Ibn Sīnā—also known as Avicenna, according to the Latinized form of his name—composed the *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ* (*Book of the Cure, or: of the Healing*) in the culminant phase of his life and at the climax of his philosophical production. The bulk of the work came to light approximately between 410/1020 and 417/1027, namely about ten years before the author's death and in the phase of composition of his major works, whereas the prologue was written some time later, around 419/1029 (Gutas 1988, 101–12). According to the disciple, secretary, and biographer of Avicenna, Abū ʿUbayd ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Muḥammad al-Jūzjānī—who reportedly fostered the composition of the work, prompted the master to concentrate on it against the recurrent external odds, and wrote an explanatory introduction to it—the four parts of this extensive summa (logic, natural philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics) were not written by Avicenna in the order in which they were meant to appear in the actual work, and were not even all concluded in distinct periods of time: Avicenna rather wavered from natural philosophy to logic, and from logic to mathematics, before finishing each of these parts, the part on metaphysics being the only portion of the work to be written without interruption and, as we are reported by al-Jūzjānī, in one breath. This discontinuous and intermingled order of composition of the *Shifāʾ* is related—and in part also causally connected—with Avicenna's personal vicissitudes during the composition of this summa: Avicenna's life was particularly chaotic at the time, since he changed more than once political patronage (from the protection of the Būyid emir Shams al-Dawla and of his son Tāj al-Mulk, to that of the Kākūyid emir ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla), migrated from one capital city (Hamadān) to another (Iṣfahān), after a period of self-imposed concealment in Hamadān and of detention in the castle of Fardajān, and finished the work en route, during a military expedition in which he took part. Under these circumstances, the metaphysical section of the *Shifāʾ* (*Ilāhiyyāt*, "Science of Divine Things") cannot be dated with certainty: it was probably composed between 412/1022 and 414/1024.

Avicenna wrote the *Shifāʾ* in his forties. The details of his life and the precise number and chronology (both absolute and relative) of his authentic writings remain uncertain (Reisman 2013). He was born shortly before 370/980 in the village of Afshana, in the vicinities of Bukhārā (nearby Samarkand, in nowadays Uzbekistan). After his education in Bukhārā, he began there his activity as philosopher and physician, until about 392/1002; in Bukhārā he wrote the *Ḥikma ʿArūḍiyya* (*Wisdom for Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿArūḍī*), his first philosophical summa (extant in fragments), and the *Kitāb al-Ḥāṣil wa-l-maḥṣūl* (*Book on the Available and the Valid*), a comprehensive literal commentary on the philosophical corpus, with a complement on ethics, the *Kitāb al-Birr wa-l-ithm* (*Book on Piety and Sin*), regrettably lost. Then he moved to Gurgānj (in Uzbekistan), in the capacity of jurisprudent, for about ten years (392/1002–402/1012), engaging himself there in the famous epistolary correspondence with the scientist al-Bīrūnī. Of uncertain date, but probably belonging to his youthful production, are the two classificatory treatises *Risāla fī Aqsām al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya* (*Treatise on the Divisions of the Intellectual Sciences*) and *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd* (*Book of Definitions*). Various peregrinations brought Avicenna to settle twice, during the years 402/1012–404/1014, in Jurjān (Iran), where he met the aforementioned Abū ʿUbayd al-Jūzjānī, wrote some important philosophical treatises (*al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād, Provenance and Destination; Ḥāl al-nafs al-insāniyya, State of the Human Soul*), and started the composition of his magnum opus in medicine, the *Qanūn fī l-ṭibb* (*Canon of Medicine*). After a short stay in Rayy (Iran), summoned there by the local rulers for his fame as physician (404/1014–405/1015), he dwelled longer in the two Iranian cities to which his name is most closely related, Hamadān and Iṣfahān. In the former (405/1015–415/1024), he completed the *Qanūn fī l-ṭibb*, started the *Shifāʾ*, and wrote other two short summae: the *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma* (*Sources of Wisdom*), and the *Kitāb al-Hidāya* (*Book of the Guidance*). In the latter (415/1024–428/1037), he finished the *Shifāʾ* and wrote his other main philosophical summae (*Kitāb al-Najāt, Book of the Salvation; Dāneshnāme-ye ʿAlāʾī, Book of Science for ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla*, in Persian; *al-Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya, Eastern Wisdom; Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt, Book of Pointers and Reminders*), as well as an extensive literal commentary on the traditional philosophical writings, the *Kitāb al-Inṣāf* (*Book of the Fair Judgement*), two parts of which—the exegesis of *Metaph.* Λ.6–10, 1071b5–1075a27, and a more extensive explanation of the *Theologia Aristotelis*—survive thanks to *reportationes* or summaries made by disciples. Avicenna died between May and June 428/1037, during a military expedition toward Hamadān, where he is buried.

7.2. THE METAPHYSICS OF IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL MASTERPIECE

In the philosophical output of Avicenna, the *Shifāʾ* stands out in many respects. It belongs to the period of Avicenna's full maturity, in close proximity to his other main works, and represents, by the author's own admission, the cornerstone of his production. Avicenna reworks in it some of his previous writings (the *Kitāb al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād* of 403/1013, for metaphysics, and the *Ḥāl al-nafs al-insāniyya*, of 404/1014, for psychology), and summarizes it in some later works (*Najāt*). Moreover, it is Avicenna's last summa to contain a mathematical part originally written by the author himself. In the prologue, he underscores the pivotal role of the *Shifāʾ*, by relating it to some of his coeval works, namely the *Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya*—in whose introduction, conversely, he refers back to the *Shifāʾ*—and the *Kitāb al-Lawāḥiq* (*Book of the Appendices*), at the time still in progress and probably later transfused into his last two works, the *Kitāb al-Taʿlīqāt* (*Book of Annotations*) and the *Kitāb al-Mubāḥathāt* (*Book of Discussions*). He also points at its dependence on the previous philosophical tradition, especially Aristotelian and, more in general, Peripatetic, as its quintessence; the traditional character of the work, however, does not imply a passive resumption of previous elaborations, but allows a considerable degree of originality, in terms of rearrangement of the outlook of the single disciplines, transfer of relevant topics from one science to another, and formulation of new doctrines. In all these respects, the *Shifāʾ* provides the most perfect—in the sense of most comprehensive, articulated, and dense—instance of the literary genre invented and cherished by Avicenna, namely the summa of logic and theoretical philosophy (Gutas 2013). Avicenna's later summae modify the exposition of the *Shifāʾ* only with regard to the amount of information provided, the style of communication, and the organization of the topics dealt with, without manifesting any marked doctrinal evolution. Unsurprisingly, the *Shifāʾ* is the writing of Avicenna most attentively considered by Avicenna's disciples: besides the introduction written by the above-mentioned Abū ʿUbayd al-Jūzjānī (Gutas 1988, 49–54), this summa elicited close study and heated debate within the circle of Avicenna's followers (Reisman 2002, 195–96; Janssens 2007; Al-Rahim 2009, 14), and is mentioned in the first two items of the bibliography of Avicenna's works (the so-called "Longer Bibliography") appended to his biography (ed. Gohlman, p. 91; Gutas 2014, 401-405). Together with the *Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, it is also the Avicennian work most influential in later Arabic philosophy and Islamic theology, as the wide manuscript dissemination and the numerous commentaries attest (Wisnovsky 2013, 2014). It is the only philosophical work of Avicenna translated systematically, albeit incompletely, in Latin during the Middle Ages (Janssens 2011; Bertolacci 2011a), exerting by means of its Latin translation a deep impact on the philosophical and theological thought of medieval Christianity (Bertolacci 2013). Signs of its influence can be traced also in Jewish culture (Freudenthal-Zonta 2012; Harvey 2015).

If the *Shifāʾ* in its entirety deserves to be considered Avicenna's masterpiece in philosophy, the same can be said of each of its single sections with respect to their philosophical sectors. This applies in particular to the *Ilāhiyyāt*, which instantiates at the highest degree Avicenna's view of the fundamental role of metaphysics in the system of philosophy, displays a thorough reworking of the canonical text on metaphysics and of the subsequent metaphysical tradition, and evidences Avicenna's originality and creativeness. The work has been repeatedly printed (Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 1885, 1960, 1997–98, 2004a, 2004b; and the facing Arabic text in Marmura trans. 2005) and translated into modern languages (Horten 1907; Anawati 1978, 1985; Demirli-Türker 2004; Marmura 2005; Lizzini 2006; Bertolacci 2007); also its later influence has started to be studied (Anawati 1978, 1985; Hasse-Bertolacci 2012). The incipient research on its massive manuscript transmission (Bertolacci 2008a; Ahmed 2012; Witkam 2012) and on its widespread indirect tradition (Janssens 2012; Wisnovsky 2012) indicates that the current printings rely on a scanty documental basis, and points at the necessity of a future critical edition that may remedy the imprecisions and methodological flaws of the available versions (Bertolacci 2006, 483–558). Inspection of Arabic codices disregarded in the current printings, and of the Latin medieval translation (Avicenna Latinus 1977–83), has evidenced the presence in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of significant structural variations that may either reflect revisions made by Avicenna himself, or depend on modifications introduced by Avicenna's immediate disciples. The work—more than 450 pages in the Cairo printing of 1960—consists of ten treatises, each of which is divided into a variable number of chapters, although the precise amount of chapters of some of its treatises, especially the fifth, is uncertain, due to the aforementioned structural variations in the textual witnesses (Mahdavī 1954, 168; Bertolacci 2012a, forthcoming). Consultation of manuscripts also provides a more precise glimpse of the terminology used by Avicenna, and of the historical background of his lexicon (Bertolacci 2012b).

7.3. PRIMACY AND UNITY OF METAPHYSICS

As in Avicenna's treatises on the classifications of the sciences, and in the surveys of the organization of philosophy in other works of his, also in the *Shifāʾ* metaphysics comes as the last branch of theoretical philosophy and, consequently, as the conclusion of the work. Avicenna's summae differ with regard to the place they assign to metaphysics within theoretical philosophy. In most of them (besides the *Shifāʾ*, in *Ḥikma ʿArūḍiyya, ʿUyūn al-Ḥikma, Hidāya, Najāt, Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*), after the propaedeutic treatment of logic, the sequence of theoretical disciplines is given traditionally by natural philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics, or simply by natural philosophy and metaphysics, due to the frequent omission of mathematics. By contrast, in the Persian summa *Dāneshnāme-yi ʿAlāʾī*, and possibly also in the incompletely extant *al-Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya*, the order is reversed and much more original: after logic, metaphysics constitutes the beginning, rather than the end, of theoretical philosophy, in such a way that the "subjective" order of learning is abandoned in favor of a disposition that emphasizes the "objective" importance of metaphysics. In the *Shifāʾ* Avicenna endorses the former perspective but espouses somehow also the latter. On the one hand, he places in pivotal junctures of the summa recurrent outlines of the structure of the work, or classifications of the sciences, in which metaphysics comes invariably at the end: this happens in the author's prologue (*Madkhal* I, 1, 11.1–13; Gutas 1988, 53–54), in the first chapter of the work (*Madkhal* I, 2; Marmura 1980a), at the beginning of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*Ilāhiyyāt* 1960, I, 1, 3.8–4.17; Marmura trans. 2005, 1–2), and also, on a reduced scale, at the beginning of natural philosophy (the mathematical part, by contrast, begins in medias res). These structural sketches—which serve to the reader as a kind of map of the work and a checklist of its progress, and keep its various parts interconnected in a coherent and unified whole—contain occasional attestations of the role of metaphysics as the culmination of all theoretical philosophy (see the proemium of the psychology of the *Shifāʾ*, in *Nafs*, 3.12). In the same vein, doctrines already established in the previous parts of the work, considered as fully proved there, are often recalled in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, with explicit acknowledgment of their provenience, thus confirming the role of metaphysics as ending discipline. On the other hand, in the parts devoted to logic, natural philosophy, and mathematics one finds frequent prospective references to forthcoming treatments in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of a number of logical, physical, and mathematical key doctrines preliminarily outlined in these parts and waiting to be conclusively assessed in metaphysics; these prospective postponements are often matched by retrospective references in the *Ilāhiyyāt* to the parts of the summa in which the doctrines in question first occur (see Bertolacci 2006, 272–94). Consonant with this second trend is the fact that in various places of the *Shifāʾ* (*Burhān* II, 7, 165.3–7.11–16; III, 1, 194.6–11; *Qiyās*, I, 2, 13.14–17; *Ilāhiyyāt* 1960, I, 1, 5.7–8), as well as elsewhere, Avicenna frequently remarks that metaphysics is the discipline deputed to discuss and elucidate those epistemological principles, both general and specific, whose validity all the other sciences simply assume. These two kinds of cross-references between the previous parts of the summa and metaphysics determine de facto a focal convergence on the *Ilāhiyyāt* of all the philosophical disciplines previously taken into account (for the special connection of logic and metaphysics, see Bertolacci 2011b; for that of psychology and metaphysics, see Druart 2000, 270–73).

Metaphysics is epistemologically central in Avicenna's *Shifāʾ* not only with regard to the philosophical disciplines that come before it (logic, natural philosophy, and mathematics), but also with respect to those that follow it, since it presents conclusively an outline of practical philosophy, preceded by the clarification of the doctrine (prophecy) upon which this area of philosophy, according to Avicenna, rests (Kaya 2012). A comprehensive, albeit succinct, account of the three traditional branches of practical philosophy—namely ethics, economics (in the sense of household management), and politics—can be found in the last two chapters of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (X, 4–5), as a kind of appendix to the previous three chapters of the same treatise on prophecy: chapters 1–3 deal, more specifically, with the general context of prophecy, that is, the influence of heavenly beings on worldly things (X, 1), the metaphysical proof of the possibility and actual existence of prophecy, after the account of its concrete functioning in psychology (X, 2), and the religious implications of prophecy, with particular regards to worship (X, 3). Practical philosophy is annexed to, and intimately connected with, the metaphysical treatment of prophecy, insofar as the prophet's function, according to Avicenna, is not limited to the organization of religion, but invests also the legislation of human life in all its aspects, from personal conduct, to family management, to the administration of the state. The tenth treatise in its entirety provides in this way an account of practical philosophy that is a synthesis between Islamic tenets and Greek philosophical views. In other summae, like the *Najāt*, practical philosophy is anchored in metaphysics, but receives a much briefer analysis, and ends in correspondence with the conclusion of *Ilāhiyyāt* X, 3. In the *Dāneshnāme-yi ʿAlāʾī*, prophetic legislation is mentioned as a topic to be dealt with, but receives no specific treatment, since at the end of the conclusive section on natural philosophy, the account of this topic is delayed to another, unspecified, place (Achena-Massé 1955–58, 2:90). Likewise, in the *Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya*, practical philosophy is envisaged preliminarily as an articulated treatment of ethics, economics, politics, and prophetic legislation, disconnected from metaphysics and attached to natural philosophy; de facto, however, it is probably reduced to prophetic legislation, as in the *Najāt*, and it is apparently absent from the work, as in the *Dāneshnāme-yi ʿAlāʾī*, since no treatment of prophetic legislation (or of ethics, economics, and politics) figures in its table of contents (see Gutas 2000, 167–69, 177–80). Only in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, therefore, does metaphysics actually figure as a real cornerstone of the philosophical building, both *ex parte ante*, with respect to logic and the other two parts of theoretical philosophy, and *ex parte post*, with respect to practical philosophy, in both its religious accretions and philosophical fundament.

The *Ilāhiyyāt* instantiates clearly Avicenna's inclination, expressed also in previous and later works of his, to regard metaphysics, despite the plurality of names (the official designation "metaphysics" in chapter I, 3, and the names "divine science," "first philosophy," "wisdom," "universal science," and "the highest science" elsewhere), as a wholesome science internally articulated into two main constitutive units: ontology (the investigation of "existent qua existent") and philosophical theology (the special investigation of God and divine realities insofar as they are the first causes and principles of "existent qua existent"). Avicenna's works on metaphysics display variations of the comprehensiveness and length (both absolute and respective) of ontology and philosophical theology; in all these works, however, metaphysics figures as a single science in two parts (see Bertolacci 2006, 149–211). Only the *Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya* seems to provide a more severing articulation: in the classification of the sciences at the beginning of this summa, ontology and philosophical theology do not represent two integral parts of metaphysics, but rather two distinct and independent theoretical sciences, designated by different names, namely "universal science" (*al-ʿilm al-kullī*) and "divine science" (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*) respectively (Ibn Sīnā, *Ḥikma mashriqiyya*, 7.5–7, 8.9–10; Gutas 2000, 168–69; for "universal science" as a name of ontology see also the section on logic, 16.17.20, 17.21). This bipartition of metaphysics into ontology and philosophical theology has precise doctrinal grounds, since it rests upon a divide of the realities investigated by metaphysics into things totally unmixed with matter, and things partially mixed with matter (Ibn Sīnā, *Ḥikma mashriqiyya*, 6.23–7.1, 7.2–4), contrary to Avicenna's tendency elsewhere to prospect the entities studied by metaphysics as a single, albeit variegated, group (see, for instance, *Aqsām*, 84.24–85.2; *Ilāhiyyāt* 1960, 15.17–16.8). It has also far-reaching epistemological consequences: the bipartition of metaphysics entails a fourfold division of theoretical philosophy, rather than the traditional threefold partition; and the articulation of theoretical philosophy into four parts, in its turn, prompts Avicenna, for the sake of uniformity, to envisage an equally unprecedented fourfold division of practical philosophy into ethics, economics, politics, with the addition of prophetic legislation (*Ḥikma mashriqiyya*, 7.8–8.7), although this more comprehensive pattern of practical philosophy is meant to be accomplished on a reduced scale (*Ḥikma mashriqiyya*, 8.10–11). The switch from the view of metaphysics as a single science having two intimately related parts (a *metaphysica generalis* dealing with "being qua being," followed by a *metaphysica specialis* dealing with God as the First Causes of being) in the *Shifāʾ* to the clear-cut demarcation of universal ontology from philosophical theology in the *Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya* is certainly a sign of the more original and independent way of exposition that Avicenna avowedly follows in this work in comparison to the *Shifāʾ* and the other summae (see, in particular, *Ḥikma mashriqiyya,* 7.5–7; Gutas 1988, 254). One, however, cannot concretely evaluate which kind of impact this refined epistemological conception of metaphysics had on the actual presentation of this discipline in the *Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya*, since its part on metaphysics is not preserved by the manuscripts presently known. Therefore, apart from the generic indications of the existence of alternative and more rigid ways of conceiving the inner structure of metaphysics (and consequently of theoretical philosophy) in the *Ḥikma al-mashriqiyya*—whose congruity with the actual content of the work remains unverified—the articulated unity of this discipline displayed by the *Ilāhiyyāt* represents Avicenna's prevailing structural model.

7.4. Sources

The *Ilāhiyyāt* provides the best example of Avicenna's original way of adapting into a new context the metaphysical sources at his disposal. The synergy between continuity and innovation typical of the *Shifāʾ* reaches in the *Ilāhiyyāt* its peak: Avicenna's treatment of its main source—Aristotle's *Metaphysics*—and of the ensuing metaphysical tradition offers a privileged vantage point to observe how he succeeded in combining adherence to Aristotle's work and its later transmission, and renewal of the metaphysical tradition to which he intended to contribute (see Bertolacci 2006). Instances of original adaptation of the authoritative texts can surely be found also in other parts of the *Shifāʾ* (on natural philosophy, see Hasnawi 2000, 510–11; Hasnawi 2002); but the originality of the *Ilāhiyyāt* with regard to its remote and proximate models can be considered as unparalleled elsewhere in the work.

A changed attitude toward, and a decreasing reliance upon, the authority of Aristotle with respect to Avicenna's previous metaphysical works is noticeable in the *Ilāhiyyāt*. First of all, explicit quotations of the Greek master are fewer: in the earlier *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-Maʿād*, for example, eight explicit references to *Metaphysics* Λ occur, only four of which are resumed in the parallel places of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (see *Mabdaʾ*, 34.3; 61.10 = *Ilāhiyyāt* 1960, 392.4; 61.18 = *Ilāhiyyāt* 1960, 392.9; 62.3 = *Ilāhiyyāt* 1960, 392.15–16; 68.7 = *Ilāhiyyāt* 1960, 401.16; 68.14; 68.21; 85.8). Second, the *Ilāhiyyāt* adopts less direct modes of referring to Aristotle, switching from the proper name "Aristotle" and the title "*Metaphysics*," typical of previous works, to the definite descriptions "First Teacher" (*al-muʿallim al-awwal*) and "First Teaching" (*al-taʿlīm al-awwal*); this switch emphasizes, on the one hand, the absolute authority of Aristotle in philosophy and the magisterial value of his writings, but it also reveals, on the other hand, a progressive distance from the historical figure of Aristotle and his transmitted works, as well as the intention to evaluate the Greek master on account of his doctrines, without following him blindly because of his fame (see Gutas 1988, 286–93; Bertolacci 2006, 318–19, 560–61, 573). This less marked dependence on Aristotle, finally, is joined with the insurgence of veiled criticisms, which represent another remarkable "stylistic" feature of the *Ilāhiyyāt*: Avicenna cites Aristotle and the *Metaphysics* not only as "First Teacher" and "First Teaching," but also by means of less conspicuous formulas—like generic names, pronouns, and verbs ("the Ancients," *al-awwalūn*; "a group," *qawm*; "someone," *man*; "they say," *yaqūlūna*; "it was believed," *ẓunna*), or indeterminate expressions that underscore the common opinions or *endoxa* that Aristotle occasionally discusses ("what is commonly believed," *al-mashhūr*, etc.; see Bertolacci 2006, 319–20)—which often convey a criticism. It is as if in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, through these explicit, but indeterminate, quotations, Avicenna aimed at disguising his disagreement with the "First Teacher," using an indirect way of expressing it, without compromising the reverence paid to the "First Master" and to his metaphysical teaching. The disguised criticism of Aristotle that looms behind the *Ilāhiyyāt* and other parts of the *Shifāʾ*—like the explicit polemic toward the Greek philosopher formulated in the *Inṣāf* (see, for example, *Sharḥ Lām*, 23.21; 30.23; 31.11–18; Gutas 1988, 288 and n. 12; Pines 1987, 191–92)—can be taken as the counterpart of the respect, deference, and esteem that Avicenna constantly feels toward Aristotle, both at a "formal" level and in a substantial way, in his oeuvre. In general, he proves to be a "critical" evaluator of Aristotle, that is, a follower deeply conscious of the greatness of Aristotle's achievements and the superiority of the "First Teacher" with respect to the other ancient masters, but also an independent thinker capable of detecting and correcting the flaws of his model.

Avicenna's independence of thought with respect to Aristotle determines a thorough reworking of the *Metaphysics* in the *Ilāhiyyāt*. This elaboration shows two radical aspects of modification. Avicenna changes, first, the "form," that is, the scientific profile, of Aristotle's work. Accordingly, he modifies also its "content," namely the disposition and doctrinal purport of the single treatises of the work. The changes regarding the "form" affect four main areas: the theme of metaphysics, its structure, its method, and its relationship with the other sciences. The content of the *Metaphysics*, on the other hand, is reworked by means of a different arrangement of its parts, the integration of Aristotle's thought with the subsequent metaphysical speculation, both Greek and Arabic, and the introduction of some original key doctrines. Cumulatively, in these two ways one observes on Avicenna's part a real "reform" of the authoritative text on metaphysics.

In the former regard, Avicenna shows that the theme of the science of metaphysics corresponds coherently to all the different, and somehow contrasting, ways in which Aristotle portrays this discipline in the *Metaphysics*. For Avicenna metaphysics is, primarily and constitutively, a study of "existent" (cf. *Metaph*. Γ.1, 1003a20–26), since "existent qua existent" is its subject matter. Avicenna proves this point at length, by means of three successive arguments (chapter I, 2), after having excluded that God and the first causes can perform the function of subject matter of metaphysics (chapter I, 1). This primary focus on "existent qua existent," however, does not prevent metaphysics from being, in another respect, a study of the first causes and God (cf. *Metaph*. A.1, 981b28–29; A.2, 982b9–10), since the first causes and God are its "goal," namely the final outcome of the investigation of "existent." In a further respect, metaphysics is also a study of immaterial and motionless things (cf. *Metaph*. E.1, 1026a13–23), since both "existent qua existent," on the one hand, and God and the first causes, on the other, are realities of this kind: God and the first causes (or at least the first causes within formal, efficient, and final agency) are immaterial by nature, whereas "existent" is immaterial "in principle," insofar as it encompasses within its scope both material and immaterial things, and belongs therefore, at least partially and at its highest degree of instantiation, to the immaterial world. Avicenna is the first thinker in the history of philosophy to have devoted to the issue of the subject matter of metaphysics a distinct and articulated treatment, whose later impact on Arabic and Latin philosophy has been enormous (Fakhry 1984; Davidson 1987, 284–88; Gutas 1988, 238–54; Hasnaoui 1991, 235–39; Ramón Guerrero 1996; Bertolacci 2006, 111–47).

In line with the position of "existent" as its subject-matter, metaphysics in the *Ilāhiyyāt* is construed according to a well-defined structure, which replaces the somewhat inconsequential arrangement of the treatises of the *Metaphysics* (Bertolacci 2006, 149–211). Schematically speaking, this more coherent structure results from the intersection of two vertical axes with three horizontal layers. The vertical axes are the study of "existent qua existent" and the study of the concept more closely related to "existent," and in a way "parallel" to it, namely "one qua one" (these two axes are called here for the sake of brevity, respectively, Ontology and Henology). The horizontal layers are given by the investigation of the species, properties, and causes of "existent" and "one." Ontology is the first and main axis of metaphysics, since it regards the subject matter of this science: it displays a threefold articulation in analysis of the species of "existent" (OntologyS, chapters II–III, 1; III, 3–5; III, 7–10, on the categories of substance, quantity, quality, and relation), of its properties (OntologyP, treatises IV–VI, on prior and posterior, potency and act, perfect and imperfect, whole and part, universal and particular, cause and effect), and of its first causes and principles (OntologyC, chapters VIII–X, 3). Since the ultimate cause of "existent" is God, OntologyC is tantamount to a treatment of philosophical theology (accordingly, it is called here OntologyC/

Theology), further articulated into a proof of God's existence, a study of His nature, and a treatment of cosmology, theodicy, eschatology, and prophetology. Henology is a complementary and shorter axis with respect to Ontology, dealing with the concept "one" along similar lines, but on a reduced scale. It encompasses two distinct parts: a treatment of the species of "one" and "many" (HenologyS, in chapters III, 2–6, 9, intersected with the treatment of quantity in OntologyS), namely "one" by accident and "one" by essence (this latter divided into "one" by genus, by species, by differentia, by relation, by subject, and by number), absolute and relative multiplicity, and the opposition "one"-"many"; and an analysis of their properties (HenologyP, chapter VII, 1), on sameness by accident, sameness by essence, otherness, alterity, difference, privation, and contrariety. The highest segment of Henology merges with OntologyC/Theology, which contains an extensive treatment of God's oneness (VIII, 4–5), and represents therefore the culmination and peak—or, in Avicenna's words, the "seal"—of metaphysics in the *Ilāhiyyāt*. The main bulk of the work, arranged in this way, is enriched by a few structural complements: an introductory part on the foundation of metaphysical knowledge (chapters I, 1–4, which, on the footsteps of the ancient prolegomena, provide a preliminary account of the goal, utility, rank, name, and division of the discipline dealt with, to which Avicenna adds the discussion of its subject matter; and chapters I, 5–8, which introduces, more originally, Avicenna's view of the primary concepts, the pivotal distinction of Necessary Existent by virtue of Itself and possible existent by virtue of itself, the proof of the Necessary Existent's oneness, and the logical axioms); a digression devoted to the refutation of pre-Aristotelian philosophers, especially Plato and the Pythagoreans (chapters VII, 2–3); and an appendix on practical philosophy (chapters X, 4–5).

In comparison with Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, the method of the *Ilāhiyyāt* is both more apodictic—that is, more dependent on rigorous proofs like demonstrations—and, conversely, less dialectical—namely less confident about the truth of commonly accepted opinions, and less reliant on objections, questions, and doubts as heuristic tools (Bertolacci 2006, 213–63). On the one hand, Avicenna clarifies the status and limits of metaphysics as a demonstrative science, due to the empirical constraints of human knowledge (Gutas 2012a, 414–17), reworks the original arguments of Aristotle in syllogistic form, and pays considerable attention to the truth and certainty of the premises of proofs. In the same vein, he complements the recourse to demonstrations with procedures that we can call "analytical," since they imply the articulation of states of reality, concepts, and terms, like proofs by division, terminological distinctions, and overarching classifications. On the other hand, he endeavors to reduce the role and visibility of the dialectical procedures adopted by Aristotle. Thus, he places the doxographies of *Metaph.* A, M, and N in an appendix to Henology (chapters VII, 2–3), rather than at the beginning and at the end of the work, in an emphatic position, as in the *Metaphysics*. Likewise, he quotes only a very thin selection of the aporias of *Metaph.* B, disseminating them in different places of the *Ilāhiyyāt* and always connecting them with their solution; by the same token, he constantly provides a clear-cut reply at the numerous objections, questions, and doubts that he takes into account.

More coherently and systematically than in Aristotle, metaphysics is for Avicenna the apex of the system of sciences (Bertolacci 2006, 265–302). In the concrete classification of the sciences to which the table of contents of the *Shifāʾ* amounts, metaphysics functions as the *regina scientiarum* that ascertains the principles of all the other sciences and makes these latter interconnected and hierarchically ordered. The scientific principles assessed by metaphysics are, on the one hand, the logical laws common to all the sciences (the axioms), and the universal concepts that every science uses without discussing them (the primary concepts like "existent," "thing," "necessary," "one"). On the other hand, metaphysics clarifies the principles that are proper to each of the particular sciences and that regard their specific subject matters, that is, the epistemological hypotheses of the single sciences. Thus, metaphysics proves the very existence and the mode of existence of the subject matters of the other sciences (like the existence and way of existence of universals and categories with regard to logic, of matter and form with regard to natural philosophy, of discrete and continuous quantity with regard to mathematics). Through the three branches of theoretical philosophy, this foundation regards also the disciplines subordinated to logic, natural philosophy, and mathematics. The foundation of practical philosophy, on the other hand, lies, as we have seen, in the discussion of prophecy at the end of OntologyC/Theology (chapters X, 1–3).

As to the recasting of the content of the *Metaphysics* in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, Avicenna quotes in different extents—using several Arabic translations of Aristotle's work, and adopting various quotations techniques—all the fourteen books in which the *Metaphysics* is traditionally divided (apart, perhaps, from book K), but according to an order that is strikingly different from that of Aristotle's work. Thus, the themes of book A are reproduced not at the beginning of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, but at the end of Henology (chapters VII, 2–3). The doctrine of *Metaph.* α.1–2 is transferred even "further," namely to OntologyC/Theology (chapters VIII, 1–3), in conjunction with *Metaph.* Λ.6–10 (scattered themes in chapters VIII, 4–8). The fate of book Γ is opposite: it is not "postponed" to other books, but rather placed in the forefront of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (prolegomena, as to the subject matter of metaphysics; and introduction, as to the defense of the logical axioms), where it plays a pivotal epistemological role (see Houser 1981, 1999; Bertolacci 2006, 375–401). Together with book Γ, the first chapter of book E inspires some themes of the prolegomena, whereas chapters 2–4 of this book lie in the background of some minor points of the introduction and of OntologyS. The doctrine of book Z (and, to a lesser extent, of book H) figures in the treatment of substance in OntologyS (treatise II), and in the treatment of the universals (treatise V) and of material and formal causes (chapter VI, 4) in OntologyP. A comprehensive summary of book Θ occurs in the analysis of potentiality and actuality within OntologyP (chapter IV, 2). Book I is the main source of HenologyP (chapter VII, 1). Books M and N, finally, are quoted together with book A at the end of Henology. The remaining books of the *Metaphysics*, rather than differently ordered, are "scattered" in the *Ilāhiyyāt*. Thus, Avicenna refers to some aporias of book B in distinct places of the introduction, OntologyP, and OntologyC/Theology (see Bertolacci 2006, 403–40). Likewise, several terminological distinctions deriving from book Δ serve (sometimes with critical tones) as linguistic preliminaries to the treatment of various issues in many parts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (in particular, prolegomena, introduction, OntologyS-HenologyS, OntologyP, and HenologyP). In general, Avicenna reworks the content of the *Metaphysics* around three main "poles": the epistemological pole (prolegomena and introduction), given by books Γ and E, 1; the ontological-henological pole (OntologyS-P and HenologyS-P), constituted primarily by books Z, H, Θ, and I, in which book B plays a "troubleshooting" role, book Δ provides the semantic preliminaries to the discussion, and books A, M, and N serve as a doxographical complement; and the theological pole (OntologyC/Theology) constituted, as far as Aristotle is concerned, by books α.2 and Λ.6–10.

In the *Ilāhiyyāt*, Avicenna does not only modify the scientific profile and the content of the *Metaphysics*, as indicated above; he also integrates the bulk of Aristotle's work with themes taken either from other Aristotelian writings, or from sources belonging to the Greek and Arabic Peripatetic tradition, or from his own cultural context. In comparison with the Peripatetic lineage, the recourse to the Platonic tradition is comparatively meager and oblique (see Aouad 1989; D'Ancona 2000; D'Ancona 2003; Bertolacci 2006, 455–60; D'Ancona 2007), in light of Avicenna's outspoken criticisms of Plato's doctrine of ideas, conducted in Aristotle' footsteps (Marmura 2006; Bertolacci 2009; Porro 2011), and his limited use of the metaphysical works of Neoplatonic ascendance ascribed in Arabic philosophy to Aristotle (the Plotinian *Theologia Aristotelis* and the Proclean *Liber de Causis*), whose Aristotelian authorship he seems to doubt and whose doctrinal errors he intends to correct (see Adamson 2004; Bertolacci 2006, 47 and n. 29). Thus, Avicenna's reshaping of the epistemological profile of the *Metaphysics* has three main sources outside Aristotle's work: first, the *Organon*, in particular the model of science presented in the *Posterior Analytics*, which Aristotle himself tentatively applies to metaphysics in *Metaph.* Γ and E.1 (Marmura 1990, 89–98; Hasnawi 2013); second, the considerations on the science of metaphysics that Avicenna could find in the parts of Alexander of Aphrodisias's and Themistius's commentaries on the *Metaphysics* available in Arabic, as well as in the later Greek Prolegomena to Aristotle's works, which inspire, either directly or indirectly, the first four chapter of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (Lizzini 2005; Bertolacci 2006, 169–70); third, the Arab interpreters of Aristotle, above all the "project" of a rigorous metaphysics presented by al-Fārābī in *On the Goals of the "Metaphysics"*, which might in its turn derive from an essay by Ammonius Son of Hermeias on the goals of Aristotle's works, lost in Greek but mentioned by Arabic sources (see Bertolacci 2006, 37–64). OntologyC/Theology is the section of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in which the integration of Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian material is most clearly visible. Thus, the Aristotelian core of this section—in which the connection of *Metaph.* α.2 with Λ.6–10 is a reflex of al-Kindī's selective way of envisaging the content of the *Metaphysics*, and a remnant of Avicenna's youthful, that is, pre-Farabian, approach to the work (see section 7.5 below)—is expanded by means of accretions taken from Alexander of Aphrodisias's and Themistius's works on metaphysics, from the pseudo-Aristotelian, in fact Neoplatonic, prolongations of the *Metaphysics* current in Arabic philosophy, and from the theological sections of some metaphysical and political treatises by al-Fārābī. Moreover, mathematical patterns are at work in the scheme of the emanation of the universe from God that Avicenna envisages (R. Rashed 2002). Finally, the examples, the terminology, and the themes of OntologyC/Theology, as well as the theological views discussed in other parts of the work, indicate Avicenna's intention to show that the rational underpinnings of Islamic religion are congruent with, and clarified by, the philosophical worldview expressed in metaphysics (Marmura 1991–92, 2012). In this perspective, the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Shifāʾ* provides a prime example of "contextual" reading of the *Metaphysics*, that is, an interpretation of this work that takes into account, together with the original text, also the other writings of the Aristotelian corpus, the subsequent Aristotelian tradition (both Greek and Arabic), cognate types of metaphysical speculation (the Neoplatonic pseudo-Aristotelian works on metaphysics), and the cultural tendencies of his own environment (Islamic theology).

7.5. MAIN DOCTRINES

In his personal elaboration of the previous tradition, Avicenna introduces in the framework of metaphysics several original doctrines: no part of the *Ilāhiyyāt* is copied verbatim from the *Metaphysics* or any other Greek and Arabic work at Avicenna's disposal, and unprecedented insights can therefore be found practically in each of its chapters. Discrete accounts of specific Avicennian doctrines have been provided in several studies of various length, and some general presentations are also available (see, among the most recent, Menn 2013 and Adamson 2013), although a comprehensive picture of the doctrinal purport of the work still lacks. Among the metaphysical doctrines that can be regarded as fruits of Avicenna's mind, some have narrower scope and occur in localized parts of the work, while others are recurrent and capable of interconnecting and unifying, in virtue of their fundamental and all-encompassing character, its various themes. To the first group belong the doctrine of categories, with particular regard to substance and relation (Marmura 1975; Stone 2001; Lizzini 2004; Zghal 2006; Pazouki 2007; Tegtmeier 2007); the theory of universals (Marmura 1992; Black 1997; De Libera 1999; Druart 2012); the account of causation (Marmura 1981; Ivry 1984; Marmura 1984a; Wisnovsky 2002; Bertolacci 2002; Wisnovsky 2003a, 181–95; Wisnovsky 2003b; Richardson 2013); the discussion of God's nature, acts, and way of knowledge (Marmura 1962, 1985; Acar 2004; Zghal 2004; Acar 2005; Adamson 2005; McGinnis 2011b; Black 2012); the process of emanation of the universe from God and cosmology (Frank 1992; Janssens 1997; M. Rashed 2006; D'Ancona 2007; Acar 2010; Janos 2011; Lizzini 2011; McGinnis 2011a); the explanation of the presence of evil in a world governed by divine providence (Inati 2000; M. Rashed 2000, 223–24; Steel 2002); and the afterlife of the human soul after its separation from the body (Michot 1986; Gutas 2012b).

Representative of the second group are three main doctrines: the already mentioned theory on the subject matter of metaphysics, because of its far-reaching structural implications; the distinction of essence and existence, which is the real theoretical leitmotif of the work; and the metaphysical proof of God's existence, grounded in Avicenna's view of the subject matter of metaphysics and of causation, and placed at the beginning of OntologyC/Theology. The distinction of essence and existence that Avicenna posits in all beings other than God is probably the most famous of Avicenna's own doctrines. Despite its roots in ancient Greek philosophy and antecedents in pre-Avicennian *falsafa* (Burrell 1986; Adamson 2002; Strobino 2015), the doctrine can be regarded as originally Avicennian, and its novelty and versatility explains its success in later Arabic and Latin philosophy (Hasse-Bertolacci 2012). Moreover, insofar as it determines the difference of the primary notions "thing" (i.e., "item having an essence") and "existent" (i.e., "item having existence"), it grounds Avicenna's doctrine of the primary concepts, which includes, besides "thing" and "existent," also "one" and "necessary," and governs, as we have seen, Avicenna's conception of the structure of metaphysics, on the route leading to the Latin medieval theory of the transcendentals (see Marmura 1984b; Druart 2001; Lizzini 2003; Wisnovsky 2003a, 197–263; Aertsen 2008; Bertolacci 2008b; Koutzarova 2009; Menn 2012). According to the usual scholarly presentation of this doctrine, a created being, like a triangle or a horse, has a determinate essence (to be a three-sided geometrical figure, to be a four-legged solid-hoofed animal with flowing mane and tail, respectively), regardless of its existence in the external reality or in the human mind. Whereas in all worldly beings existence is necessarily connected with essence by an external cause, and is therefore contingent, the existence of God does not supervene on any essence whatsoever, or simply coincides with the divine essence, thus having no cause and being necessary per se: God is the only being that exists necessarily on account of itself. The distinction of essence and existence represents the real cornerstone of Avicenna's ontology, since it runs parallel to fundamental epistemological notions (like the recurrent pair *taṣawwur*, "conceptualization," and *taṣdīq*, "granting assent"), or governs Avicenna's conception of the relationship between metaphysics and the other sciences (insofar as metaphysics deals with the existential questions that the other sciences do not face, since they investigate only the essence of their subject matters). It underlies, more specifically, crucial theoretical areas of Avicenna's metaphysics, from the beginning until the end of the *Ilāhiyyāt*. For example, it explains the initial description of metaphysics as the science dealing with things that are immaterial both in essence and in existence (chapter I, 1); in the same context, it inspires the third and conclusive proof of "existent" as the subject matter of metaphysics: "existent," as primary concept, does not require a proof of its essence and its essence—a proof that, in case, should be provided by a science higher than that of which it represents the subject matter—and thus it is particularly fit to play the role of subject matter of the supreme science (chapter I, 2). In the treatment of substance in treatise II, it explains why the form of corporeality can have a definite and complete essence, that is, extension along the three spatial dimensions, albeit lacking independent existence (chapter II, 2). Within the account of causality in treatise VI, it elucidates in what sense the final cause can be taken as the first type of causality—and therefore as the cause of all other causes—despite being the last kind of cause that is actually realized: the final cause is the first cause in terms of essence, since it is the first cause envisaged by the agent, and in this respect it causes all other causes, whereas it is the last in terms of existence, since its existence requires the previous existence of all other causes (chapter VI, 5). The examples could continue. Most famous is Avicenna's application of the distinction to his theory of universals in treatise V, and to the account of God's nature in treatise VIII. Universality is regarded by Avicenna as an attribute that belongs to a given nature not as such, that is, according to its essence, but when this latter possesses a particular type of existence, namely existence in the human mind, once it is abstracted from the things by which it is instantiated. On the other hand, in God this distinction fades, either because God has no essence at all, but only existence, or because He has an essence that is totally identical with His existence (Avicenna oscillates between these two positions); in either case, the absence in God and the presence in all other things of the distinction between essence and existence determines the main discrimination of Avicenna's cosmos, by setting God apart from all other beings of the world.

Bibliography on this doctrine is rich, since the pioneering study of Goichon (1937) until more recent and documented accounts (see, above all, Wisnovsky 2003a, 145–80). It also orients the scholarship on Avicenna in an intercultural direction, since insightful presentations of this doctrine can be found in studies on its Latin reception. The current "essentialist" presentation of the doctrine (see, for instance, El-Bizri 2001) takes as vantage point Avicenna's doctrine of universals in treatise V, and portrays the distinction as a kind of separation of the two items, with essence regarded as "indifferent" or "neutral" to existence tout court (rather than to either of the two possible modes of existence, i.e., in the mind and in the external reality, as Avicenna contends), and existence taken conversely as dependent on essence. This view has been recently questioned, on the basis of the different scenario that emerge from Avicenna's fundamental account of the distinction in chapter I, 5 of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (Bertolacci 2012): here, the two items are not only distinguished, but also intimately connected and portrayed as mutually concomitant; moreover, in this chapter, Avicenna hints at the conceptual priority of existence over essence (he describes essence in term of existence by calling it "proper existence"), confirmed in the rest of the work by analogous indications of its extensional superiority (Avicenna regards God as an existent lacking an essence, whereas he considers all essences as existing either in the mind or in external reality.) This emphasis on the primacy of existence, and of the corresponding primary concept "existent," over essence and "thing," on account of logical priority and greater universality, represents a *unicum* among the various treatments of essence and existence in Avicenna's oeuvre, and it may depend on the Peripatetic character of the *Shifāʾ*, recorded among its salient features in the prologue (*Madkhal*, 10.14; Gutas 1988, 52). Significantly, the *Ilāhiyyāt* is the only work of Avicenna in which the issue of what metaphysics is precisely about is faced and solved along Aristotelian lines, namely positing "existent" as the subject matter of this discipline, on the footsteps of *Metaph.* Γ; accordingly, Avicenna subordinates to "existent," in different ways and respects, the other primary concepts: "necessary" is defined as "assuredness of existence"; both "necessary" and "one" are described as properties of "existent." The aforementioned tendency to underscore the priority of "existent" and existence with respect to "thing" and essence appears to be part of the same intent of showing that "existent" is the first and most universal among the primary concepts and deserves therefore to be alone the subject matter of the first and most universal science. Peculiarities of the treatment of essence and existence in the *Ilāhiyyāt* emerge also from the terminological point of view, since in this work (as in the *Najāt*) Avicenna occasionally designates essence by means of the term *shay'iyya* ("thingness"), whereas elsewhere he employs the more common term *māhiyya* ("quiddity") (see Wisnovsky 2003a, 173–80, 245–63).

Comparable to the distinction of essence and existence for its width and importance is the proof of God's existence in the *Ilāhiyyāt.* Also this doctrine is segmented in various passages of the work, is intimately connected with fundamental themes, like the theory of the subject matter of metaphysics, and the relationship between metaphysics and natural philosophy, and turns out to be original, in crucial respects, with regard to the other metaphysical writings of Avicenna (Marmura 1980b; Davidson 1987, 237–40, 339–40; Rudolph 1997; Alper 2004; Bertolacci 2007, 78–82; Gutas 2012a, 415–16; Adamson 2013, 170–71). The *Ilāhiyyāt* shows poignantly how this doctrine is discontinuous with respect to Aristotle (for Avicenna, metaphysics—rather than physics, as in Aristotle—proves God's existence), but possesses at the same time a strong Aristotelian basis (Avicenna grounds his metaphysical proof of God's existence on a precise doctrine of the *Metaphysics*). Two main loci of the *Ilāhiyyāt* are commonly regarded as relevant. The first is chapter I, 6, in which Avicenna posits the fundamental distinction between the existent that is necessary on account of Itself (God), and the existents that are contingent on account of themselves, and necessary on account of something else, that is, on account of their causes and, ultimately, of God (all beings other than God). The second is chapters VIII, 1–3, the starting point of philosophical theology (OntologyC/Theology) of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, in which Avicenna shows, in Aristotle' footsteps, that the chains connecting causes and effects in each of the four canonical types of agency (formal, material, moving/efficient, and final) are finite on both sides, that is, they end upward into a first cause and do not proceed downward toward an infinite series of effects; in these chapters, the primary cause in the realm of efficient causality is identified by Avicenna with God, even though in the remainder of the work God's causality is associated also with final agency. Since these two passages have different doctrinal character and belong to two distinct and far removed parts of the work, scholars disagree as to whether Avicenna meant to provide the proof of God's existence in the former, in the latter, or somehow in both. Another fundamental passage in chapter I, 3 of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (21, 1–8) clarifies the issue, since it refers in all likelihood to chapter I, 6 as a "pointer" (*ishāra*) to the fact that a properly metaphysical proof of God's existence is available, and to chapters VIII, 1–3 as the actual place where this proof is provided. Thus, even though the argument in I, 6 displays clear similarities with the proof of God's existence in a work closely related—in content and chronology—to the *Ilāhiyyāt*, namely the *Najāt* (chapter II, 12), the evidence internal to the *Ilāhiyyāt* points rather to VIII, 1–3 as the place where the proof of God's existence is offered (Davidson 1987; Bertolacci 2007; De Haan 2016).

In the course of his career, Avicenna changed his view of the nature of the metaphysical proof of God's existence. In his early metaphysical writings, he adopted both a "physical" or "cosmological" proof—namely a proof relying on cosmic movement, and leading to God as First Mover—and a properly "metaphysical" proof, that is, a proof independent from empirical data and grounded on immaterial notions, conducive to God as Necessary Existent. Subsequently, however, he changed his mind: he regarded the "physical" proof as alien to metaphysics, and accordingly removed it from the metaphysical agenda, restricting it to the realm of natural philosophy (Gutas 1988, 263–65; Bertolacci 2007, 77–78. I incline to take the texts from the *Inṣāf* and the *Memoirs of a Disciple from Rayy* reported by Gutas as attesting not Avicenna's absolute rejection of the physical proof, but only of its application to a metaphysical context; Davidson 1987, 237 and n. 6, documents the presence of a physical proof of God's existence in the part of the *Najāt* dealing with natural philosophy [II, 12–14]). In the *Ilāhiyyāt*, the expulsion of the physical proof of God's existence from metaphysics is accompanied by noteworthy hints to the theoretical feebleness of the physical proof itself. First, in chapter I, 1 (6.19–7.6) Avicenna contends that the proof of God's existence belongs properly only to metaphysics, and that the treatment in physics of this topic is an anticipation with propaedeutic function, but no normative value. Second, in chapter I, 3 (21.2–4), he clarifies that the metaphysical proof of God's existence does not rely on empirical data (as the physical proof does), but rests on purely intellectual premises. Third, in chapter IX, 1 (373.13–18) he proposes a long and detailed proof of the eternity of the heavenly motion, meant to provide a better comprehension of the issue and therefore to supersede the proof given in natural philosophy, which is retrospectively recalled and summarized. Since the eternity of heavenly motion is an essential element of the physical proof of God's existence, in IX, 1, Avicenna aims apparently at laying in metaphysics the theoretical foundation of this crucial ingredient of the physical proof of God's existence, thus depriving physics of the very possibility of providing autonomously, in its own way, such a proof and, consequently, of dealing with God's nature and related topics. Avicenna's evolution on the issue marks a progressive distance of his standpoint from Aristotle's genuine position (for Aristotle physics proves God's existence, and metaphysics resumes this proof from physics): the anti-Aristotelian character of Avicenna's proof was aptly remarked by an acute critic of Avicenna and commentator of Aristotle like Ibn Rushd (Averroes).

At the same time, however, the proof of God's existence in the *Ilāhiyyāt* remains fundamentally Aristotelian, namely based on a doctrine of Aristotle that functions as cornerstone of Avicenna's argument. The reliance on a precise passage of the *Metaphysics* is a peculiar feature of this proof, and a further aspect of originality of the *Ilāhiyyāt* with respect to the other metaphysical writings of Avicenna. In the locus of the *Ilāhiyyāt* where the proof lies (chapters VIII, 1–3), Avicenna derives avowedly from *Metaph.* α.2 the idea that the series of causes and effects in each of the four types of causality are finite, construing the proof of God's existence on the finiteness of the upward ascent toward higher and higher causes in the realm of efficient causality, and on the ensuing existence of a first principle of efficient causality, regarded as the absolute First Principle. The "pointer" to the actual proof in chapter I, 6 of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, as well as the metaphysical proofs of God's existence in the *Najāt* and in other works of Avicenna, rely, on the contrary, on general concepts of previous Greek and Arabic philosophy, adopted also by Islamic theology ("necessary" and "contingent" in their application to "existent"), rather than on a precise text of Aristotle. Although the doctrine of *Metaph.* α.2 complements the proofs of God's existence in other metaphysical writings of Avicenna, in these latter the doctrine in question is merely accessory and is never accompanied by a comprehensive paraphrase and a detailed discussion, as in the *Ilāhiyyāt*. In other words, the proof of God's existence in the *Ilāhiyyāt* is neither physical, nor vaguely metaphysical, that is, based on pure concepts of metaphysical relevance: it is rather metaphysical in the stronger—and much more historically connoted—sense of being based on a fundamental tenet of Aristotle's etiology as expressed by the *Metaphysics*. At par with the emphasis on the fundamental role of "existent" among the primary concepts, also the reliance on a precise Aristotelian text about causation for the proof of God's existence in the *Ilāhiyyāt* fits quite well Avicenna's preliminary description of the *Shifāʾ* as a book constitutively dependent on the ways of expositions of the Peripatetic tradition.

Avicenna pays special attention to *Metaphysics* α.2 not only doctrinally—by making it the core of the proof of God's existence—but also from the stylistic point of view. He quotes very carefully this locus of the *Metaphysics*: he introduces in its paraphrase frequent references to the *Metaphysics* ("First Teaching") and its author ("First Teacher"), as well as an explicit mention of book Alpha Elatton itself: he integrates Aristotle's text with explicative expansions; and he defends the doctrine at stake by means of the solution of a long series of possible objections. Within OntologyC/Theology, the same special treatment is reserved, to a lesser degree, to *Metaph.* Λ.6–10: in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, it is exclusive of these two portions of Aristotle's work. Interestingly, Avicenna's special care for *Metaph.* α.2 and Λ.6–10 in the *Ilāhiyyāt* appears to be a remnant of his youthful way of reading Aristotle's text, attested also, upon close inspection, by his autobiography. Avicenna, in fact, had a progressive acquaintance with the text of the *Metaphysics* during his philosophical education. Initially, he apparently knew only what he calls in the autobiography the "essential parts" of Aristotle's work, basically *Metaph.* α.1–2 and Λ.6–10, within a theological framework in which α.1–2 introduced directly Λ.6–10, to the exclusion of the other intermediate books; in focusing only on these two loci of the *Metaphysics*, Avicenna was inspired by al-Kindī's way of understanding metaphysics as a theological discipline, and by the Kindian attitude of connecting immediately the beginning of Aristotle's work (which, in the Arabic tradition, is book α) with its theological outcome (book Λ). When he subsequently read the integral text of the *Metaphysics*, he realized the inadequacy of this approach and its exegetical shortcomings. Thus, he endorsed al-Fārābī's mode of envisaging Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, in which all the books of this work and both its dimensions, ontological and theological, are taken into due consideration: this switch to a Farabian way of conceiving the *Metaphysics* is vividly recorded in the famous autobiographical anecdote of the "providential" encounter in the marketplace with al-Fārābī's essay *On the Goals of the "Metaphysics"*, a short treatise capable of revealing to Avicenna the hermeneutical guidelines of the entire work of Aristotle (see Bertolacci 2006, 37–64, 321–28).

7.6. Conclusion

For its thorough recasting of the epistemological profile of the science of metaphysics and the profound revision of the content of the canonical text on this subject; the sharp novelty and deep impact of its original doctrines; and the distinctive traits that it exhibits with respect to the other Avicennian works on metaphysics, the *Ilāhiyyāt* represents an unparalleled peak in the history of Western metaphysical thought. On the one hand, it is the last and widest of a series of exegetical transformations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. On the other hand, within the Peripatetic tradition it constitutes the first concrete replacement of the *Metaphysics* with an original treatment of the science of metaphysics, thus granting this latter the possibility of autonomous progress. Insofar as the *Ilāhiyyāt* is constitutively linked with Aristotle's work, takes into account all the previous speculation on metaphysics, and keeps the non-Aristotelian components of this field of enquiry (Neoplatonic and theological) within the boundaries of Aristotle's original framework, it is an expression of the medieval Peripatetic tradition. On the other hand, insofar as it is neither a literal commentary nor a paraphrase of the *Metaphysics*, but an original elaboration of this work, and displays epistemological concerns that are foreign to Aristotle, it anticipates the modern approach to metaphysics. If, in the Arab world, al-Fārābī is rightly called the "second Teacher," that is, the second Aristotle, Avicenna deserves, perhaps, the appellative of "second Andronicus": on account of his profound reworking of the epistemology and of the purport of the *Metaphysics*, it is not far-fetched to compare his version of Aristotle's work in the *Ilāhiyyāt* with Andronicus of Rhodes's editorial activity, and to regard this part of the *Shifāʾ* as a sort of second "edition" of the *Metaphysics*, or second "beginning" of the Western metaphysical speculation. The extensive, profound, and lasting influence of Avicenna's metaphysics in subsequent Arabic, Latin, and Hebrew philosophy confirms this undisputable fact.

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CHAPTER 8

RECONCILING RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY
NĀṢIR-I KHUSRAW'S (D. 1088) *JĀMIʿ AL-ḤIKMATAYN*

KHALIL ANDANI

8.1. Life and Works

Most of what is known of Nāṣir-i Khusraw comes from his own writings. Born in Khurāsān in 394/1004 into a notable family, Nāṣir served as a treasury official under the Seljuqs for several years. In his early forties, he experienced a powerful dream that lead him to set out in search of wisdom and true happiness. Through this pursuit of knowledge, he eventually journeyed to Cairo. Cairo was the seat of the Fatimid Caliphate established by the Ismāʿīlīs—a community of Shīʿī Islam that upholds the continuation of the religious and charismatic authority of the Prophet Muḥammad through a line of hereditary spiritual leaders, or imams. This line began with ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) and continues through an uninterrupted chain of his descendants to the present day.

While the exact details remain unclear, Nāṣir did come to embrace the teachings of Ismāʿīlī Islam and received intellectual and spiritual training at the hands of his teacher al-Muʾayyad fī l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078). This initiation culminated in Nāṣir giving his allegiance (*bayʿa*) to the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh (d. 487/1094). Nāṣir then returned to Khurāsān as a Fatimid Ismāʿīlī summoner (*dāʿī*), holding the exalted rank of *ḥujjat* (the "proof" of the Imam). Nāṣir's teaching activities were met with both success and great danger. On account of the latter, he was forced to flee eastward and live the remainder of his life in the village of Yumgān, located in the remote Pamir Mountains. Nāṣir found refuge under the protection of the benevolent prince Abū l-Maʿālī ʿAlī b. al-Asad and continued teaching and writing until the end of his life. His spiritual and intellectual legacy has had a lasting impact upon the Ismāʿīlī Muslim communities of Central Asia, among whom his poetry continues to be recited, his prose read and reflected upon, and his personality revered.

In addition to being known for having written several important travel diaries in Persian (Khusraw, *Book of Travels*), Nāṣir is still regarded as one of the greatest poets of the Persian language. This explains why many popular versions and at least two scholarly editions of his collected poetic works (*Dīwān*) are extant (for his philosophical poetry, see the studies in Hunsberger 2013).

Among Nāṣir's prose works are his *Gushāyish wa-rahāyish* (*Knowledge and Liberation*), which deals with thirty questions of a theological and philosophical nature concerning subjects such as the Creator and creation, eternity and time, free will and predestination, and the soul-body relationship (Khusraw, *Liberation*). *Khwān al-ikhwān* (*The Feast of the Brethren*) is a text of one hundred chapters concerning a number of subjects, including metaphysics, the nature of the human rational soul, the concept of creation, and eschatology. This text also reworks parts of the *Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ* (*The Book of Wellsprings*) of the Ismāʿīlī philosopher Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (d. after 361/971), whose adoption of Neoplatonic metaphysics left a lasting impression on medieval Ismāʿīlī thought in general, and the thought of Nāṣir in particular (Sijistānī 1994). *Shish faṣl* (*Six Chapters*) explicates a number of key Ismāʿīlī metaphysical teachings concerning, inter alia, God, cosmology, psychology, and soteriology. *Zād al-musāfirīn* (*Provisions for Travellers*) deals with the human quest for knowledge and the necessary provisions one requires along this journey (Khusraw, *Zād*). *Wajh-i dīn* (*The Face of Religion*) provides an esoteric interpretation of Ismāʿīlī law (*sharīʿat*), covering subjects such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage (Khusraw, *Expressions*).

The most important text for our present purposes is the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*. This Persian work was written at the request of Nāṣir's aforementioned patron, who had asked him to address a number of challenging philosophical and religious questions posed by a certain Abū l-Ḥaytham al-Jurjānī in a lengthy poem. As Nāṣir composed this text based on the structure of the questions posed by Jurjānī, his explanations of the major doctrinal themes are often scattered throughout several chapters. What follows is a reconstructed presentation of the central theological, philosophical, and mystical doctrines to be found throughout the *Jāmiʿ*.[1]

8.2. OVERVIEW

Nāṣir-i Khusraw explains his reasons for composing the *Jāmiʿ* with reference to the four Aristotelian causes (efficient cause, material cause, formal cause, final cause), but divides the material cause into two aspects, thereby presenting us with five causes. Nāṣir himself is the efficient cause, his pen and knife constitute the instrumental or active material cause, the paper upon which the text is written is the passive material cause, the forms of learning that Nāṣir possesses comprise the formal cause, and the prince who requested Nāṣir's response to Jurjānī's questions is the final cause. Nāṣir also adds two further causes, the spatial and the temporal cause. These seven causes that Nāṣir presents evoke several key Ismāʿīlī doctrinal symbols, such as the seven heavens, seven Messengers, seven Imams, etc. which are further discussed below.

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[1] This chapter uses Eric Ormsby's translation of the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* (2012). References to the *Jāmiʿ* are as follows: the title, the paragraph number in the original Persian text (which is retained in Ormsby's translation), and the page number(s) of the translation itself.

Nāṣir's stated purpose in writing the *Jāmiʿ* is to "reconcile the science of true religion, which is one of the products of the Holy Spirit, with the science of creation, which is one of the necessary concomitants (*ʿalāʾiq*) of philosophy" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶20, 32). By "philosophy" (*falsafa*), Nāṣir is evidently referring to the Greek intellectual heritage stemming from what he refers to as the "deiform philosophers" (*mutaʾallihān-i falāsifa*), namely Empedocles, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶65, 67). The overall thrust of his work is therefore to demonstrate that philosophical wisdom (*ḥikmat*) stands in harmony with Ismāʿīlī wisdom (*ḥikmat*). His intentions are also motivated by an annoyance with certain Muslims in his own time who spurned the study of the physical world as unbelief (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶15, 27). He answers such a charge by citing a well-known prophetic saying, "reflect on the creation but not on the Creator," and concludes, in a manner similar to that of Averroes (d. 595/1198) some two centuries later (Averroes *Decisive Treatise*, 2), that reflection on creation must be religiously obligatory (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶15, 27). Besides his patron, Nāṣir also has two potential audiences in mind: his Ismāʿīlī co-religionists and the philosophers/logicians. He therefore takes recourse to both scriptural statements and demonstrative modes of argumentation through the work, but clearly gives priority to revelation:

> In it I have spoken both to the sages of religion, using verse from God's Book and from the Traditions of His Prophet, and to the sages of philosophy and the experts in logic, employing rational proofs together with premises leading to satisfying conclusions. For the treasury of wisdom lies in the secret heart of him who is the seal and the heir of the prophets—upon them be peace—and yet, there is also a whiff (*shammatī*) of wisdom in the writings of the ancients. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶21, 33)

The *Jāmīʿ* contains thirty-four chapters. The layout of each chapter is explicatory and contrastive in that Nāṣir first presents the views of the philosophers on a particular issue, and then presents the doctrines of the Ismāʿīlis—referred to as the Sages of the True Religion (*ḥukamā-yi dīn-i ḥaqq*), the People of Spiritual Hermeneutics (*ahl-i taʾwīl*), or the People of Spiritual Inspiration *(ahl-i taʾyīd*)—which either critique or supplement the views of the philosophers. Nāṣir's method of engaging with Jurjānī's questions and reconciling the seemingly divergent positions of philosophy and Ismāʿīlī doctrine is that of *taʾwīl,* a form of spiritual hermeneutics employed by Ismāʿīlī authors throughout their writings. The following section serves as an illustration of how *taʾwīl* is a fundamental feature of the *Jāmiʿ*, as well as the key that leads one to the central argument of the work.

8.3. HERMENEUTICS

The Ismāʿīlī thinkers distinguished between the *ẓāhir* (exoteric) and *bāṭin* (esoteric) dimensions of religion. For them, *taʾwīl* is a method of spiritual hermeneutics that disclosed the *bāṭin* of the divine revelation, namely the Qurʾān. As Nāṣir-i Khusraw defines the term, *taʾwīl* is "to return" a thing to its metaphysical origin. The opposite of this term is *tanzīl*, which is to "bring down" or express spiritual realities from this origin in the form of sensible symbols and parables. The concepts of *tanzīl* and *taʾwīl* as respective movements of descent and ascent are situated within an ontology, in relation to which "*taʾwīl* presupposes the superimposition of worlds and interworlds, as the correlative basis for a plurality of meanings in the same text" (Corbin 1977, 53–54).

Nāsir's worldview envisages a chain of being that consists of several "worlds": the spiritual World of Origination (*ʿālam-i ibdāʿ*) or the metacosm, the physical World of Nature (*ʿālam-i ṭabīʿat*) or the macrocosm, and the intermediary World of Religion (*ʿālam-i dīn*) or the mesocosm which bridges the spiritual and physical worlds. The World of Religion is comprised of human beings, each of whom is a microcosm (*ʿālam-i ṣaghīr*) possessing a physical body and a spiritual soul. These worlds each contain a number of hierarchical degrees or limits (*ḥudūd*).

The World of Origination consists of eternal, spiritual, subtle or simple beings such as the Universal Intellect (*ʿaql-i kullī*), the Universal Soul (*nafs-i kullī*), and the three archangelic hypostases called Jadd (Fortune), Fatḥ (Opening), and Khayāl (Imagination), and who are identified with the archangels Seraphiel, Michael, and Gabriel (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶140, 129). The World of Nature contains temporal, physical, dense or composite beings comprised of matter and form, including the celestial bodies, elements, minerals, plants, various species of animals, etc. The World of Religion consists of human beings in general and the hierarchical ranks of the Ismāʿīlī summons (*daʿwa*) in particular—consisting of the lawgiving prophet known as the Enunciator (*nāṭiq*) or the Messenger (*rasūl*), his Legatee (*waṣī*), the Imam, the Proof (*ḥujjat*), the Summoner (*dāʿī*), the Licensed Teacher (*maʾdhūn*), and the Respondent (*mustajīb*). For example, the Prophet Muḥammad was the Messenger, Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib was his Legatee and his spiritual successors from the line of Imam Ḥusayn (d. 61/680) down to the Fatimid Caliphs are the Imams. As Nāṣir has explained in one of his works, the Imam of every time is represented in the world by twenty-eight Proofs and three hundred and sixty Summoners who conduct the Ismāʿīlī summons and instruct the lower ranks of the Ismāʿīlī initiates (Khusraw, *Expressions*).

The highest ranks of the World of Religion are the recipients of *taʾyīd* (knowledge in the form of spiritual inspiration) from the Universal Intellect, which is the *muʾayyid* or source of this inspiration. In the context of ontology, *taʾwīl* is to perceive a particular object in its own ontological domain as a metaphor and symbol reflecting a corresponding reality in a higher ontological domain. This perception of correspondence between one world and another facilitates the return of the object to its spiritual origin:

> To engage in hermeneutics (*taʾwīl*) is to bring the word back to its point of origin. The first of all existing things is Origination (*ibdāʿ*), which is one with the Intellect, and the Intellect is that which sustains (*muʾayyid*) all of the emissaries [of God]. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶112, 112)

By virtue of being spiritually inspired (*muʾayyad*), the Messengers, the Legatees, the Imams, and the Proofs can perform *taʾwīl* and articulate it as discourse or instruction (*taʿlīm*) to lower members of the Ismāʿīlī summons. The objects of *taʾwīl*, each of which the Ismāʿīlī summoners "read" as expressions of the spiritual realities of the higher worlds, include the Qurʾānic text, the rules and rituals embodied in the *sharīʿat*, the World of Nature, and the psychophysical constitution of the human being. Just as the World of Nature and the human being are the "composition" (*tarkīb*) of the Universal Soul, the revealed Book, the *sharīʿat*, and the World of Religion are the "compilation" (*taʾlīf*) of the Messenger.

A classic example of *taʾwīl* performed upon the Qurʾān is Nāṣir's interpretation of the verse "Your women are fields for you so go into your fields in any way you wish" (Qurʾān 2:223). While acknowledging that the outer meaning of the verse is "have intercourse with your wives in any way you wish," Nāṣir discloses the inner meaning according to which the "women" stand for the Respondents of the Ismāʿīlī summons, and the verse commands the Summoner to "speak as he wishes" to them. This *taʾwīl* "returns" the verse to its corresponding reality in World of Religion: "women" in the Qurʾānic verses symbolize the Respondents in the World of Religion, and "intercourse" symbolizes the "diffusion of knowledge" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶344, 262).

With respect to *taʾwīl* applied to the World of Nature, Nāṣir explains how among the various categories of minerals and animals, there are two that are most noble—such as red rubies and emeralds among indissoluble minerals, gold and silver among meltable minerals, the camel and horse among animals, the date and grape among plants, and the sun and moon among heavenly bodies (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶179, 164). He then explains that "these two categories are analogous for the two men amongst all mankind which are noblest" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶180, 164), meaning the Messenger and his Legatee. This *taʾwīl* relates various natural phenomena to their corresponding origins in the World of Religion.

In other parts of the text, Nāṣir also relates how the Messenger, the Legatee, and other ranks of the World of Religion are symbols or manifestations of the ranks (*ḥudūd*) of the World of Origination such as the Universal Intellect and Universal Soul. These examples demonstrate that *taʾwīl* is, first and foremost, a "perception of hermeneutical correspondence" on the part of the exegete—presumably made possible by *taʾyīd*—that is articulated in discourse. Thus, Nāṣir's *taʾwīl* integrates all of the various "worlds" (spiritual, natural, religious, scriptural, ritual, human) in a harmonious correspondence, a phenomenon that Henry Corbin aptly describes as follows: "The *taʾwīl,* without question, is a matter of *harmonic perception*, of hearing an identical sound (the same verse, the same *ḥadīth*, even an entire text) on several levels simultaneously" (1977, 53–54).

As shall be seen, it is the "harmonic" nature of *taʾwīl* that allows Nāṣir to meet the daunting challenge of forging the reconciliation between philosophy and Ismāʿīlī doctrine. Before turning to an exposition of the manner in which he attempts this, we begin with Nāṣir's treatment of some key philosophical technical terms, as it largely sets the stage for the ensuing discussion.

8.4. Philosophical Terminology

Before engaging with the philosophical questions posed in Jurjānī's poem, Nāṣir begins by laying out his understanding of some key philosophical notions. His discussion commences with a primer on the key terms of logic as applied by Aristotle. Nāṣir begins by explaining that configuration (*hayʾat*) is different from form (*ṣūrat*) in that configuration refers to the unique shape possessed by different individuals of the same form (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶81, 82). He then goes on to explain that "definition" (*ḥadd*) is "that which is spoken about a thing such that it delimits the thing so that nothing can be added to it or brought out from it" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶85, 85). Indeed, Nāṣir gives great importance to definitions, stating that "to know things in their true nature is to know the definitions of those things" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶88, 86). Nāṣir holds that definition (*ḥadd*) can be used to explain two kinds of existents: compound things that are composed of other things like form and matter; and simple things that originated (*mubdaʿ*) ex nihilo. "Form" (*ṣūrat*) is "that by which the existence of a thing may be known," and "matter" (*hayūlā*) is "a simple substance receptive to form" (*jawharī-yi basīṭ ast padhīra-yi ṣūrat*). Substance (*jawhar*) is "that which subsists in its own nature and is receptive to contrary attributes," while "attribute" (*ṣifat*) is "an accident which descends into a substance but does not form part of its essence." An existent (*mawjūd*) is "that which we perceive either by the five senses or of which the imagination forms an image, or which something else points to" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶89, 86).

Just as the proper understanding of philosophical terms is a prerequisite for engaging philosophical concepts, a proper engagement with the metaphysical doctrines of medieval Ismāʿīlīsm is contingent upon the doctrine of *tawḥīd*, to which we will now turn.

8.5. Theology

Although Jurjānī's poem does not actually pose questions about *tawḥīd*, the very centrality of this doctrine in Islam seems to have motivated Nāṣir to address it at the beginning of his treatise. He begins by classifying all people into five groups with respect to their position on the nature of God: materialists, idolaters, Christians, dualists, and monotheists (*muwaḥḥidūn*). The latter group consists of the unreflective conformists (*ahl-i taqlīd*), the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) such as the Karrāmites and Muʿtazilites, and the Shīʿīs. Nāṣir considers himself to be among the Shīʿī monotheists, who apply *taʾwīl* to the Qurʾān and situate true *tawḥīd* between the likening (*tashbīḥ*) of God to His creatures and complete denial of God's attributes (*taʿṭīl*) (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶26, 43). Nāṣir articulates his Shīʿī Ismāʿīlī concept of *tawḥīd* by offering a number of criticisms against the other Islamic theological camps.

Nāṣir begins his critique with the unreflective conformists (*ahl-i taqlīd*) by dismissing their insistence that God is simultaneously unlike anything and also "hearing" and "seeing" as a contradiction. He refers to their view that God's knowing, hearing, and seeing is real, while man's knowing, hearing, and seeing are figurative or borrowed as absurd, and accuses the literalists of likening God to His creatures. Nāṣir is even less impressed by their claim that "God sees others while they do not see Him," and points out that the Qurʾān (7:27) also says this about Satan and his minions (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶30, 45). He goes on to accuse the literalists of not even practicing a true literal exegesis, and instead "in many instances, evading literal interpretation, engaging in hermeneutics, or simply bickering in their own ignorance" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶34, 47). This is particularly evident for scriptural passages that mention God's face, hands, or eyes, before which the literalists are entirely at odds with one another. Nāṣir concludes his critique of the literalists by remarking that their belief in God as literally having ninety-nine names amounts to nothing but sheer polytheism:

> They state that God has ninety-nine names, each of which has its distinct meaning. But any rational person knows that anyone who has ninety-nine names cannot be a single person, for each of the ninety-nine must have its own essence. Polytheism, not monotheism, underlies this group's teachings. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶40, 51)

The next part of Nāṣir's discourse targets the theology of the Karrāmites, namely followers of Ibn Karrām (d. 255/869). The Karrāmite position, as related by Nāṣir, asserts that God is a body but unlike other bodies, and is knowing, living, and powerful but that His knowledge, life, and power are unlike the knowledge, life, or power of others. Nāṣir contends that this doctrine is absurd and meaningless. For example, to say, "He is a body not like bodies" means, "He is a body, not a body," which is contradictory (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶42, 52). Nāṣir dismisses the Karrāmite position concerning God's knowledge, life, and power (i.e., that they are unlike that of His creatures) by recalling the manner in which the Qurʾān also qualifies human beings and other creatures with knowledge, power, or life (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶44, 53).

Nāṣir also anticipates a Karrāmite objection to his argument: to deny that God is knowing, living, or powerful effectively leads one to conclude that God is ignorant, dead, and powerless. In response, Nāṣir argues that both pairs of attributes—knowledge and ignorance, life and death, power and incapacity—are inadmissible for God and must be negated from Him. This is because both pairs of attributes are creaturely qualities and thus invalid for describing God (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶45, 55–56). In this respect, Nāṣir articulates an Ismāʿīlī form of the via negativa called double negation. This position was first championed by Ismāʿīlī thinkers such as al-Sijistānī and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/934). While al-Sijistānī and al-Rāzī negated qualities such as existence and nonexistence, definition and nondefinition, and perfection and imperfection from God, Nāṣir also employs double negation to negate Qurʾānic names of God, such as the Knowing (*ʿālim*), the Living (*ḥayy*), and the Powerful (*qādir*), as well as their opposites. Nāṣir concludes his critique of the Karrāmites on the subject of the divine attributes by accusing them of merely projecting their own inadequate ideas of perfection and goodness onto God, and thus falling into polytheism (*shirk*):

> It is wrong to describe God by such attributes as "ignorance" and "powerlessness"—not because they are unseemly but because they are attributes of creatures—as well as that it is also wrong to ascribe the opposites of such attributes, such as "knowledge" and "power," to Him—glory be to Him, He is exalted—on the grounds that these too are creaturely qualities. The so-called theologians of this community have plunged into grievous error in their inquiry, in ascribing their own fine qualities to God and in declaring Him devoid of their bad qualities. And for this very reason, they have fallen into polytheism. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶46, 55)

The final portion of Nāṣir's critique attacks the Muʿtazilite position on *tawḥīd*. He begins by summarizing their position, that "the Creator is one, eternal, powerful, living, hearing, and seeing; that His attributes are inherent to His essence; and that He is not comparable to anything" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶54, 61). Nāṣir does offer some praise to the Muʿtazilites, remarking that "there is no approach (*ṭarīqatī*) stronger than theirs among the various schools of Islam on the subject of *tawḥīd*" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶55, 61). But he also proudly declares that no one has been able to critique the Muʿtazilites apart from his own group—the People of Spiritual Inspiration (*ahl-i taʾyīd*). Nāṣir begins this critique by first attacking the Muʿtazilite claim that belief in *tawḥīd* should not be based on *taqlīd* (uncritical acceptance). He does so by accusing the Muʿtazilites of confusing genuine *taqlīd* with familiarity and habit. He contrasts them by explaining that the latter, habit, is evident in the belief that the world is eternal and has no creator (accordingly, a belief has no prophetic summons), while the former, genuine *taqlīd*, is that to which all the Prophets summoned humankind. Nāṣir evidently sees value in *taqlīd* as a necessary first step to arriving at deeper truth: "He who rejects *taqlīd* never arrives at the discernment of deeper truth; it is by way of acceptance that one arrives at God's oneness and a grasp of the truth" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶58, 63). But Nāṣir also asserts that a person who accepts the Prophet's Book and the *sharīʿat* through *taqlīd* is equally obliged to study their *taʾwīl*. He argues this need for the *taʾwīl* of the Qurʾān by quoting several Qurʾānic verses that describe God with the qualities of His creatures, such as speech, creation, providence, mockery, revenge, knowledge, power, life, and hearing. Unless interpreted through *taʾwīl*, these verses simply lead to contradictory anthropomorphism (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶¶ 59–60, 86).

Nāṣir then attempts to refute the Muʿtazilite doctrine that at least some of God's attributes are identical with His Essence (the so-called Muʿtazilite doctrine of essential attributes) (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶¶61–62, 65–66). He notes that an attribute (*ṣifa*) cannot subsist by itself but only through what it qualifies (*mawṣūf*), and any such attribute would be an accident in God's essence. Thus, qualifying God with any sort of attributes leads to His essence being a substrate of accidents (*maḥall-i aʿrāḍ*). This leads Nāṣir to conclude that an essence with six different attributes (knowledge, power, life, hearing, seeing, eternity) is actually a composite substance. "This doctrine of theirs," Nāṣir writes, "that attributes are attributes essentially, comes from a sort of fervour which has alighted within their hearts, a fervour which they cannot quite articulate correctly" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶62, 66). Nāṣir concludes his critique of the Muʿtazilites by accusing them of the very anthropomorphism that they sought to avoid:

> To posit one essence with six different attributes is not true *tawḥīd*. Quite the opposite: it is to posit a multiplicity. Nor can it be true *tawḥīd* to ascribe creaturely attributes to God. On the contrary, that is anthropomorphism. This group never sees anything better than themselves and indeed, fancy themselves to be God. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶64, 67)

Through his critique of the literalists, the Karrāmites, and the Muʿtazilites, it is evident that Nāṣir-i Khusraw's concept of *tawḥīd* negates all attributes and qualities from God, such as knowledge, life, power, hearing, and sight. He equally negates the opposites of these attributes from God, namely ignorance, death, incapacity, deafness, and blindness. As will be seen in subsequent parts of the *Jāmiʿ*, Nāṣir also exalts God above intelligibility and oneness. In another work, he elevates God above philosophical and ontological categories such as cause and effect, unity and multiplicity, existence and nonexistence, and necessary and contingent being (Khusraw, *Liberation*, 42). This overall perspective serves as the foundation for Nāṣir's Neoplatonic metaphysics explored in the next section.

8.6. METAPHYSICS AND COSMOGONY

Nāṣir's metaphysics unfolds in a hierarchical cosmology consisting of the following levels: the Command (*amr*) of God, Universal Intellect, Universal Soul, Matter and Form, Universal Nature, Universal Body, the Spheres, the Elements, and the three Kingdoms—mineral, plant, and animal (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶151, 138). Ultimately, the goal of creation is the human being.

Nāṣir differentiates between the Origination (*ibdāʿ*) and "creation" (*khalq*). The former refers to the act of bringing something into being ex nihilo, while the latter is the determination (*taqdīr*) of a thing from another thing. After surveying several views on whether the world is originated or created with respect to its form and/or matter, Nāṣir observes that the world is configured, articulated, mobile, constrained, and compelled—all of which serves as sufficient proof that someone or something is constraining and compelling the world to be the way it is (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶258, 200). Nāṣir concludes that God is responsible for configuring the world in both its form and its matter, and that God's action must be through His decree, as opposed to His essence or nature. He refers to this decree of God that configures and compels the world as an act of Origination (*ibdāʿ*) or

Command (*amr*). Nāṣir maintains that the creative process, from the Origination down to the composition of the World of Nature, is atemporal and instantaneous: “There was absolutely no temporal ‘before’ and ‘after’ in the existence of the heavens, one with respect to the other” (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶307, 227).

Nāṣir then argues that the existence of particular souls in the vegetables, plants, and human beings implies the existence of the Universal Soul as the origin of the world. He also reasons that the existence of intellect (*ʿaql*) in human beings among all animals implies that it is a higher faculty in which the nobility of the soul is found. This allows him to conclude that there is a Universal Intellect over and above the Universal Soul (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶258, 200).

8.6.1. Universal Intellect and Universal Soul

Nāṣir-i Khusraw, along with other medieval Ismāʿīlī thinkers such as al-Sijistānī and al-Rāzī, regards the Universal Intellect (*ʿaql-i kullī*) as the first originated being by means of God’s Command, and the Universal Soul (*nafs-i kullī*) as the emanation of the Universal Intellect. The Universal Intellect is perfect in potentiality and actuality. It is the simple, luminous substance that contains the forms of all things (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶89, 88). In another work, Nāṣir describes the Intellect as being endowed with the seven essential attributes: eternity (*dahr*), truth (*ḥaqq*), joy (*shādī*), demonstration (*burhān*), life (*zindigānī*), perfection (*kamāl*), and self-sufficiency (*bī-nīyāzī*) (Khusraw, *Khwān*, 150–51). While Nāṣir negated these attributes from God Himself, he applies them to the Universal Intellect and, in a less perfect manner, to the Universal Soul. The Universal Intellect contemplates its own essence as the intellecter (*ʿāqil*), the intellect (*ʿaql*), and the intellected (*maʿqūl*), as there is nothing that its essence does not encompass (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶105, 104). Throughout the *Jāmiʿ*, Nāṣir refers to the Universal Intellect as the “Active Intellect” (*ʿaql-i faʿʿāl*), a term bequeathed by Aristotle (Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3.5) and appropriated in early Islamic philosophy before Nāṣir’s time, most notably in the Neoplatonic cosmologies of Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Avicenna (d. 428/1037).

8.6.2. Unity and Multiplicity

The Intellect, being complete and actual, is existentially united with the Command of God in the manner that “white” and “whiteness” are one in existence. Nāṣir even differentiates between the “Absolute One” (*aḥad; yakī-yi maḥḍ*) that admits no multiplicity, and the “Multiple One” (*wāḥid; yakī-yi mutakaththir*) that is at the root (*aṣl*) of multiplicity. Thus, God is the “Absolute One,” and the Universal Intellect is the “Multiple One” because it is comprised of both “oneness” (*waḥdat*)—identified with the Command of God—and “substance” (*jawhar*), which implies potential multiplicity. The term “the one” (*wāḥid; yakī*) in the numerical sense properly applies to the Universal Intellect and not to God as such. God Himself is the Originator (*al-mubdiʿ*) of both “the one” (*wāḥid*) and "oneness" (*waḥdat*), where the latter is His Command or trace (*athar*) (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶150, 137). A similar observation is to be found in later Islamic thought in the writings of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) and his school, where they distinguish between God's exclusive oneness (*aḥadiyya*) and His inclusive oneness (*wāḥidiyya*) (Rustom 2014). In Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *Jāmiʿ*, this distinction would correspond to the "Absolute One" (God as such) and the "Multiple One" (Universal Intellect) respectively.

8.6.3. Eternity, Time, and Perfection

Nāṣir defines eternity (*dahr*) as "the continuance of the eternal substance" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶114, 113) and "absolute duration" (*baqā-yi muṭlaq*) (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶115, 113). Nāṣir even deconstructs the philosophers' singular notion of eternity by making a clear distinction between the "eternalizer" (*azal*, the agent of eternity), "eternality" (*azaliyya*), and the being (*azalī*) that is "made" eternal. This tripartite distinction of eternity applies respectively to God (the "eternalizer"), His Command ("eternality"), and the Universal Intellect, the being that is rendered "eternal" through the manifestation of eternality, identified with God's Command (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶193, 172).

In his *Shish faṣl* (Khusraw, *Six Chapters*, 44), Nāṣir explains that the Universal Intellect is perpetually in a state of blissful self-contemplation through its praise and worship of God. This praise of the Intellect causes the emanation of the Universal Soul, which is perfect in potentiality but imperfect in actuality due to its coming into being through the mediation of the Intellect. In delineating their relationship in the *Jāmiʿ*—in a manner akin to what is found again in Ibn ʿArabī and his school (Murata 1992, 162–64)—Nāṣir draws on such Qurʾānic terms as the Pen (*qalam*) and the Tablet (*lawḥ*). The Universal Intellect produces its loci of manifestation (*maẓāhirāt*) by emanating its intelligible forms (*ṣūrat*) upon the Universal Soul, just as a pen writes upon a paper in producing calligraphy (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶¶262–63, 202–3). Such an explanation serves to integrate Qurʾānic *taʾwīl* with the Neoplatonic Islamic doctrine of emanation. The Universal Soul desires to actualize its potential perfection and is therefore in a state of perpetual movement or activity. The movement of the Universal Soul creates and generates the Cosmos—consisting of Form, Matter, Universal Nature, human souls, and the physical world. Thus, the Universal Soul is the Creator (*khāliq*) or Artisan (*ṣāniʿ*) of the Cosmos, which is generated as a limited reflection of the Universal Intellect (Khusraw, *Six Chapters*, 71). Although the Universal Intellect and Universal Soul are both within the horizon of eternity (*dahr*), it is the Universal Soul that causes time and motion:

> Just as eternity lies within the bound of the [Universal Intellect], so does time lie within the bound of the Universal Soul; that is to say, the cause of eternity (*dahr*) is the Intellect just as the cause of time (*zamān*) is the Soul. We say that the cause of time is the [Universal] Soul since time consists of the number of movements of the sphere, according to the proponents of both forms of wisdom. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶114, 113)

The purpose of the Universal Soul's creation of the Cosmos is to engender perfect human souls such that through these souls the Universal Soul actualizes its own perfection and returns to the Universal Intellect (Khusraw, *Six Chapters*, 49). At the individual level, "The [human] soul's perfection occurs through knowledge by way of this tremendous construction" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶117, 115). At the historical and collective level, the Universal Soul engenders perfect souls through the historical cycles of the six Messengers: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad. The great soul who serves as the final instrument of the Universal Soul's actualization of perfection is the seventh among the Messengers, called the Master of the Resurrection (*qāʾim-i qiyāmat*), who reveals the spiritual meaning or *bāṭin* of all prophetic revelations. Akin to a Messianic figure, this individual who is the most perfect manifestation of the Universal Intellect ushers in the eschatological return of the Soul to the Intellect:

> The self-sufficiency of the Universal Soul from any neediness of its own occurs through that individual who can receive the connection with the Universal Intellect in its entirety and become the leader of all humanity, the final leader of all leaders, and so bring the cycle to its close. Every group has a name for him. One group calls him "Messiah," who will return; another calls him "Mahdi," and yet another, "Qāʾim." (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶117, 116)

Since the Cosmos acts as the vehicle of perfection, attention will now be given to Nāṣir's cosmology.

8.7. COSMOLOGY

The Universal Soul gives rise to two hypostases, namely Prime Matter and Universal Nature. Prime Matter is like a shadow of the Universal Soul. The Universal Soul is continuously inspired by the Universal Intellect and also contemplates Prime Matter in its creative act. Its contemplation of Prime Matter is noble (*sharīf*), and this gives rise to Universal Nature, which is an active substance (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶135, 124). Thus, Nāṣir views Universal Nature as a subtle (*laṭīf*) entity that serves as the "pupil" (*shāgird*) of the Universal Soul. Universal Nature is omnipresent in all things: "The world is filled with Universal Nature, though it occupies no place whatsoever within it, for it is a substance without spatial location (*jawhar-i nā jāy-gīr*)" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶134, 124). With respect to its function, Universal Nature "preserves each and every one of the various natures in its form so that none of them falls asunder, expires, or decays" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶132, 123).

8.7.1. The Origin of Genus and Species

In several parts of the *Jāmiʿ* Nāṣir offers a detailed discussion of the hierarchy among genus, species, and individuals in the physical world. He examines the question of priority among them from two perspectives—the intelligible (logical) and the physical. According to the intelligible perspective, Nāṣir notes that "the precedence of species over the individual and of genus over species is not temporal . . . rather, it is essential" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶278, 212). Yet, according to the physical and temporal perspective, Nāṣir states the following:

> The species is sustained by the individual, the species sustains the genus, despite the fact that the individual is within the species and the species is within the genus. In the same way, the whole depends upon its parts, even if the parts are contained within the whole. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶269, 206)

Within the context of the temporal and physical dependence of species upon individuals, Nāṣir sets forth his theory on the origin of species according to which each species (vegetable, animal, human) ultimately derive through physical descent from a "primordial instantiating couple" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶318, 236). This originating couple is not born but created without physical birth. Because each species ultimately comes from a group of two individuals (the primordial couple who together make a genus), Nāṣir's conclusion concerning the question of priority between genus, species, and individuals is that they all "occurred at a single stroke" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶318, 236).

8.7.2. The Seven Lights

One of the most eloquent examples of Nāṣir's harmonization of the teachings of the philosophers and Ismāʿīlī doctrine occurs fairly early in the *Jāmiʿ* (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶¶104–7, 103–7). In this section, Nāṣir employs *taʾwīl* to illustrate the correspondence between the aforementioned three worlds—the spiritual World of Origination, the physical World of Nature, and the intermediary World of Religion (which includes the human microcosm). Nāṣir's central thesis, which is characteristic of Ismāʿīlī thought in general, is that each world contains the traces or manifestations of the contents of the world that is higher than it. He begins by noting the philosophers' view that the physical heavens or the spheres contain seven hierarchical planets (*ajrām*) whose light shines upon the earth. Likewise, the physical earth contains seven fusible minerals in a hierarchy of nobility consisting of gold, silver, iron, copper, tin, lead, and mercury, each of which receives a share of light from the seven planets commensurate to their nature. The World of Origination contains seven primordial lights or "planets of intellect" that cause the corporeal lights or physical planets. These seven lights are God's Command; the substance (*jawhar*) of the Universal Intellect; the Universal Intellect that contemplates its own essence as Intellect (*ʿaql*), Intellecter (*ʿāqil*), and Intellected (*maʿqūl*); the Universal Soul; and the Archangels Jadd, Fatḥ, and Khayāl.

These seven intellectual lights of the World of Origination are manifest respectively in the physical heavens as the seven planets—Sun, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury—which are their effects or traces (table 8.1). The seven physical lights, in turn,

Table 8.1 The Correspondence of the Seven Lights

World of Origination (*ʿālam-i ibdāʿ*)	World of Nature (*ʿālam-ṭabī ʿat*)		Human Microcosm (*ālam-i ṣaghīr*)	World of Religion (*āālam-i dīn*)	
	Heavens	Earth		Heavens	Earth
Origination (*ibdāʿ*)	Sun	Gold	Life	Adam	Messenger
Substance of Intellect	Moon	Silver	Knowledge	Noah	Legatee
Intellect-Intellecter-Intellected	Saturn	Iron	Power	Abraham	Imam
Universal Soul	Jupiter	Copper	Perception	Moses	Proof
Jadd (Fortune)	Mars	Tin	Act	Jesus	Summoner
Fatḥ (Opening)	Venus	Lead	Will	Muhammad	Licensed Teacher
Khayāl (Imagination)	Mercury	Mercury	Continuance	Master of Resurrection	Respondent

manifest and shine upon the physical earth through the seven metals—gold, silver, iron, copper, tin, lead, and mercury. The seven intellectual lights also manifest in the human soul, the microcosm, in accordance with its capacity to contain seven attributes—life, knowledge, power, perception, action, will, and continuance. The heavens and earth of the World of Nature are mirrored by the heavens and earth of the World of Religion. In the heavens of the World of Religion, there are seven renowned lights: the seven Messengers, namely Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad, and the Master of Resurrection. These parallel the seven planets of the physical heavens, and have received the greatest share of the seven lights. The earth of the World of Religion consists of the ranks (*ḥudūd*) of the Ismāʿīlī summons comprised of the aforementioned Messenger, his Legatee, the Imam, the Proof, the Summoner, the Licensed Teacher, and the Respondent. Just as the seven minerals of the physical earth manifest a share of light from the seven planets, the seven ranks of the Ismāʿīlī summons hierarchy receive a share of the light of the Universal Intellect with the Prophet's soul being the most noble in this reception. This correspondence illustrated by Nāṣir-i Khusraw is an eloquent form of *ta'wīl*, demonstrating how the existents of the physical world "return" to the realities of the spiritual world. As Nāṣir insists that the human being is the reflection of the cosmos, the next section will explore his psychology and its attendant relationship with his cosmology.

8.8. PSYCHOLOGY

Nāṣir Khusraw's psychology is rooted in his conceptions of the soul (*nafs*), intellect (*ʿaql*), and rational utterance (*nuṭq*). Nāṣir holds that the human soul is a part (*juzʾ*) of the Universal Soul in the sense that the substance (*jawhar*) of the human soul is of the same substance as the Universal Soul. In this sense, individual human souls are instantiations of the Universal Soul. Like the Universal Soul, the human soul is enduring (*bāqī*) and accepting of knowledge (Hunsberger 2000, 213). The human soul contains three faculties that are traces (*athar*) of the Universal Soul: the growing soul (*nafs-i nāmiyya*), which is also present in plants; the sensory soul (*nafs-i ḥissiyya*), which is also present in speechless animals; and the speaking or rational soul (*nafs-i sukhan-gūʾi; nafs-i nāṭiqa*), which is present in human beings (Khusraw, *Six Chapters*, 54). The human soul is also gifted with an individual intellect (*ʿaql*), which Nāṣir defines as a simple substance by which human beings perceive things as they truly are (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶285, 218). Among these human psychological faculties, Nāṣir remarks that "life is the guardian of the body, that the rational soul is the guardian of life, and that the intellect is the guardian of the rational soul" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶285, 218). With respect to the distinction between the body, the soul, and the intellect, he says that bodies are satiated by food, the soul (*nafs*) is that which feeds on knowledge but is never satiated, and the intellect (*ʿaql*) is that which governs the body and soul and also infers signs from the visible to the unseen (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶102, 101).

8.8.1. Macrocosm and Microcosm

Later in the *Jāmiʿ*, Nāṣir illustrates a set of astrological, psychological, and religious correspondences involving the relationship between the World of Nature, the Human Microcosm, and the World of Religion (see table 8.2).[2] He begins by grouping the twelve houses of the zodiac with the seven planets. Each planet has two astrological houses (i.e., Mercury has Virgo and Gemini), while the sun and moon only have one house each (Leo and Cancer respectively) because their influence is greater than the other five planets. The sun and moon each serve as an authority (*sulṭān*) over the other five planets, which are like their servants, while each *sulṭān* has dominion (*wilāyat*) over five astrological houses (with each house belonging to one of the five planets) (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶329, 247).

Nāṣir understands the seven planets as "tools" of the Universal Soul under the guidance of the Universal Intellect in the production of the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, whose ultimate purpose is the creation of the human form (*ṣūrat-i shakhsī mardūm*), which is capable of acquiring knowledge and wisdom (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶328, 246). This astrological configuration of the macrocosm (*ʿālam-i kabīr*) is mirrored within the physical constitution of the human form, the microcosm (*ʿālam-i ṣaghīr*). Parallel with the sun of the macrocosm is the heart of the human being, which is receptive to the sun's influence and is the abode of the spirit (*ruḥ*) or intellect (*ʿaql*). Mirroring the moon of the macrocosm is the brain, which is receptive to the moon's influence and is the abode of the rational soul (*nafs-i nāṭiqa*) wherein are the internal faculties like imagination, memory, recollection, and discernment. Just as the moon receives the light

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[2] For a similar table, see Hunsberger 2002.

Table 8.2 The Correspondences between Macrocosm, Microcosm, and Mesocosm

Macrocosm (*ʿālam-i kabīr*)	Microcosm (*ʿālam-i ṣaghīr*)	Mesocosm (*ʿālam-i dīn*)
Sun (Leo)	Heart: Animates Body (spirit/ intellect)	Messenger: *taʾlīf* of Book and *sharīʿat*
Moon (Cancer)	Brain: Governs Body (rational soul)	Legatee: *taʾwīl* of Book and *sharīʿat*
Mercury (Virgo, Gemini)	Eyes: Sight (right eye, left eye)	Imam (exoteric, esoteric)
Venus (Libra, Taurus)	Ears: Hearing (right ear, left ear)	Gate (exoteric, esoteric)
Mars (Scorpio, Aries)	Nose: Smell (right nostril, left nostril)	Proof (exoteric, esoteric)
Jupiter (Sagittarius, Pisces)	Mouth: Taste (right side, left side)	Summoner (exoteric, esoteric)
Saturn (Capricorn, Aquarius)	Hands: Touch (right hand, left hand)	Licensed Teacher (exoteric, esoteric)

of the sun, thoughts begin in the heart and are transmitted to the brain. The other five planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) of the macrocosm are paralleled by the five human senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch). Just as each planet has two astrological houses, the instruments of each of the physical senses are in two parts (i.e., two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two sides of the mouth, and two hands).

After showing the correspondence between the macrocosm and microcosm, Nāṣir demonstrates how both realms are also reflected in the World of Religion or mesocosm. The Messenger occupies the place of the sun in the macrocosm and the heart in the microcosm because the life of the World of Religion comes through his compilation (*taʾlīf*) of the revealed Book and the *sharīʿat*. His Legatee occupies the place of the moon and the brain because he brings order to the world of religion through his *taʾwīl* of the Book and the *sharīʿat*. The five religious dignitaries (*ḥudūd*) under the Legatee, namely the Imam, Gate (*bāb*), Proof, Summoner, and Licensed Teacher, are analogous to the five planets of the macrocosm and the five senses of the human being. Just as each planet has two astrological houses, these five dignitaries watch over both the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspects of the Book and the *sharīʿat*. Likewise, there are six days in the physical world, and the World of Religion has six prophetic cycles of the six Messengers—the cycles of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad. As the six days are succeeded by the seventh day or Sabbath, the six prophetic cycles are succeeded by the cycle of the Master of Resurrection. Such a correspondence between the macrocosm, microcosm, and the World of Religion allows Nāṣir-i Khusraw to declare:

> Just as God the Exalted composed the structure of the human body on an analogy with the structure and composition of the world, the Prophet established the true religion on an analogy with the creation of man, so that the sages of religion would see this great model and see that it accords with creation. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶338, 253)

8.8.2. The Soul-Body Relationship

When dealing with the question of the relationship between the soul and the body, Nāṣir discusses the philosophers' view that a human being with respect to his 'I-ness' or selfhood is a combination of body and soul. He agrees with this notion while cautioning that the body-soul relationship cannot be understood in literally the same way that a knight consists of a man upon a horse (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶95, 97). He also accepts Aristotle's definition of the soul as the perfection of the body, interpreting it to mean that the body is potentially living, while the soul is living by its very essence.[3] Thus, with respect to life, the living body is a shadow of the human soul (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶109, 110).

Nāṣir also maintains that "the 'I' belongs to the rational soul, which is an intellectual substance (*jawharī-yi ʿaqlī*), knowing to the limit of potentiality, active by its very nature" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶96, 97). The rational soul is the locus of action, directing the body and its various organs and faculties. To make the point that the body is under the soul's control as its "servant," Nāṣir evokes the Platonic image of the chariot of the soul (Plato 1997, *Phaedrus* 246a), where the soul is akin to a rider and the body akin to its horse (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶101, 100). In agreement with Aristotle, Nāṣir also sees discourse or rational utterance (*nuṭq*) as the defining faculty of the human soul:

> Rational utterance is neither Arabic nor Persian or Hindi nor any language whatsoever. On the contrary, it is one of the faculties of the human soul by which a human being is capable of conveying some meaning which lies in his innermost mind to others by means of his voice, written letters, and speech. (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶186, 167)

8.8.3. Angelology

Nāṣir then relates his psychology to what one could call an angelic anthropology. He begins by discussing three kinds of angels: spiritually originated angels, visible and created angels, and human angels (the Prophets and Imams). The purely spiritual angels are originated in nature (*ibdāʿī*) through the mediation of the Universal Intellect, Universal Soul, and the Archangels Jadd, Fatḥ, and Khayāl. They are represented by the spheres and stars of the physical world—called the visible and created angels. Nāṣir also notes how the idea of the spheres and stars being angels is in agreement with the views of the early astronomer and mathematician, Thābit b. Qurra (d. 288/901) (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶138, 128).

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[3] In another work (Khusraw 1998), and in keeping with the Aristotelian notion of hylomorphism, Nāṣir defines the human soul as the form (*ṣūrat*) of the body.

The purpose of the visible angels—the stars and spheres—is to manifest the originated angels through human beings who are potential angels. Subsequently, the purpose of the Messenger, his Legatee, and the Imams is to bring these potential angels into actuality by means of the Book and the *sharīʿat*. The person who brings these potential angels (i.e., human beings) into actuality is himself an actualized angel (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶141, 129).

Nāṣir's discussion also broaches the subject of the jinn or *parī* (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶142, 130–31). Using the example of the angels bowing before Adam and the disobedience of Satan mentioned several times in the Qurʾān (Q 2:34, 7:11, 15:31, etc.), he differentiates between two types of jinn (*parī*)—angelic and demonic—depending on whether the jinn is obedient (like those who bowed to Adam) or disobedient (like Satan, who refused to bow). With respect to the human soul, the rational soul is a potential angel or an angelic jinn. The concupiscent soul (growing soul) and the irascible soul (sensual soul) are potential demons or demonic jinn. Nāṣir relates this to the prophetic tradition: "Every man has two devils who entice him." When the concupiscent soul and irascible soul subdue the rational soul, the human becomes a demon in actuality. On the other hand, when these "two devils" obey the rational soul, and the rational soul obeys the Prophet or Imam, the human being becomes an angel in actuality. Nāṣir eloquently concludes his discussion of angels, jinn, and demons with the following remarks: "Within the human being there is both an angel and a demon, but he himself is a *parī* (jinn). Human beings are angels and demons in potentiality. That world beyond is filled with angels and with demons in actuality" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶145, 133).

8.9. EPISTEMOLOGY

Several sections of the *Jāmiʿ* treat questions pertaining to the nature of knowledge, the ways of knowing, and perfection of the rational soul by means of knowledge. Knowledge, in the worldview of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and other Ismāʿīlī thinkers, has a salvific and eschatological dimension as the Universal Soul's perfection is achieved through human souls becoming actualized through knowledge.

8.9.1. Knowledge and Intellect

Nāṣir defines knowledge (*ʿilm; dānish*) as "a conception (*taṣawwur*) on our parts of a thing as it really is" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶89, 87). This view of knowledge as conception appears to be a discursive knowing, relating to the definition (*ḥadd*) of a thing as the means of knowing its true nature (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶88, 86). In this respect, knowledge is dependent upon articulate discourse (*sukhan*), as Nāṣir states: "But the perfection of the rational soul comes through knowledge and knowledge comes to man only through discourse"

(*Jāmiʿ*, ¶116, 114).[4] Nāṣir also contrasts knowledge (*ʿilm*) with *maʿrifat* or recognition (*shinākht*). In this context, knowledge is acquired by human beings through various media (thought, crafts, revelation, instruction) and includes things such as language and philosophy. Recognition, on the other hand, is innate and not acquired. It consists of the direct recognition or apprehension of things by their natures, such as thirst, hunger, or pain, without necessarily knowing their names (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶¶283–84, 217).[5]

Nāṣir distinguishes between *ʿilm* and intellect (*ʿaql*) when he defines intellect as a simple substance by which people perceive (*andar yāband*) things (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶285, 218). Accordingly, Nāṣir understands *ʿilm* to be a trace (*athar*) and act (*fiʿl*) of the intellect, and notes that the intellect is, therefore, superior to *ʿilm*, which is its trace (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶280, 216). In a similar vein, he defines the knower (*ʿālim; dānishmand*) as one who conceives a thing as it really is. This knower is contrasted with the intellectual (*ʿāqil*), who perceives (*andar yāft*) things as they truly are. The intellect can also know both sensible objects (*maḥsūsāt*) and intelligible objects (*maʿqūlāt*) at the same time (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶285, 218). The distinction between knowledge and intellect appears to correspond to the distinction mentioned earlier between knowledge and recognition, especially when Nāṣir, somewhat allusively, remarks that recognition is the basis of intellect (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶284, 218). At the conclusion of this chapter, Nāṣir notes that the names "knowing" (*ʿālim*) and "intelligent" (*ʿāqil*) cannot be applied to God directly and instead refer to the originated Universal Intellect (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶285, 218).

8.9.2. Perception

In Nāṣir's theory of perception (*idrāk; andar yāftan*), the universal perceiver (*ḥiss-i kullī*) is the substance (*jawhar*) of the human soul that perceives through the five external faculties (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch), and through the five internal faculties (estimation, reflection, imagination, memory, and recollection). Mainly concerned with external sense perception, Nāṣir argues that "the perceiving agent, i.e. the *mudrik* who perceives, is affected by his own act of perception; his state is altered while the object of perception remains as it was" (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶292, 221). Nāṣir also speaks of various levels of perception in relation to the different kinds of temporal existents: the eye perceives what is in the present, the ear perceives what was of the past, reflection (*fikrat*) perceives what will be in the future; and the intellect perceives the simple originated beings (*mubdaʿāt*) (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶294, 222). God as the Originator (*mubdiʿ*) is not reached by perception qua perception, not even by the Universal Intellect. Unlike Neoplatonic and Peripatetic Islamic philosophy, where the Intellect contemplates God in an active manner, for Nāṣir, the

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[4] In this passage, I have rendered *sukhan* as "discourse," as opposed to "language," as translated by Ormsby.

[5] Elsewhere (Khusraw, *Khwān,* 194), Nāṣir equates *maʿrifat* or recognition with man's knowledge of his own soul. A thorough exposition of self-knowledge as the goal of the philosophical life can be found in the writings of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī (nearly half of his corpus is translated in Chittick 2001).

Universal Intellect only “perceives” or “affirms” God in a passive and indirect sense through the contemplation of its own essence. This pure affirmation is free from all sensible and intelligible attributes, as a result of which the Intellect receives nobility and radiance (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶293, 221).

8.9.3. Instruction

The human intellect, according to Nāṣir’s epistemology, exists at two levels, the innate intellect (*ʿaql-i gharīzī*) and the acquired intellect (*ʿaql-i muktasab*). The former level of the intellect is potential and passive in its acceptance of knowledge. The latter level is an actual intellect that receives *taʾyīd* from the Universal Intellect. The Messengers, Legatees, Imams, and Proofs are the recipients of this *taʾyīd*. The actualization of the human intellect from potentiality to actuality is only accomplished through instruction (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶151, 138). Just as eyesight allows human beings to perceive sensible objects with the aid of light, insight is what allows a person to perceive intelligible objects with the aid of knowledge. Physical sight requires light from the sun and the moon, and insight requires knowledge from the Messenger and his Legatee, who are the sun and moon of the World of Religion (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶¶214–15, 180).

Nāṣir distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge that the human soul requires: the exoteric and the esoteric. The exoteric refers to the literal revelation (*tanzīl*) of the Book and the *sharīʿat*, filled with parables and symbols that, in keeping with Nāṣir’s analogy of knowledge being food for the human soul, he compares to “fruit that is unripe and tasteless” (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶217, 181). The esoteric refers to the *taʾwīl* of the Book and the *sharīʿat*, which is analogous to “colour, scent, and taste” (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶217, 181). In a similar vein, the Messenger who delivers the *tanzīl* is the spiritual father of human beings, and his Legatee who discloses its *taʾwīl* is their spiritual mother. Just as a newborn baby can only consume the mother’s milk and is unable to digest dense food, the newborn initiate cannot directly internalize the Prophet’s *tanzīl* unless the Legatee first applies *taʾwīl*, extracting pleasing precepts that are amenable to the initiates (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶231, 187).

8.10. RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION

The foregoing presentation of the main arguments and themes in the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* sheds considerable light on the various ways in which Nāṣir-i Khusraw saw the relationship between Ismāʿīlī wisdom and the wisdom of the deiform philosophers (*falāsifa-yi mutaʾallihān*). Nāṣir expresses clear disagreement with philosophy on a small number of issues, the most notable example being the subject of God’s creative act, where he rejects views attributed to Aristotle, Socrates, and others and instead puts forth a distinctively Ismāʿīlī doctrine of Origination (*ibdāʿ*) ex nihilo coupled with the Neoplatonic concepts of the Universal Intellect and Universal Soul.

On a few other issues, most particularly the concept of the human soul, Nāṣir integrates his Ismāʿīlī views concerning the soul as the "I" and the body as its shadow with both Aristotle's teleological conception of the soul-body relationship (i.e., that the soul is a perfection of the body) on the one hand, and Plato's famous example of the chariot of the soul (i.e., that the soul is a "rider" of the body) on the other. Needless to say, Nāṣir stands in full agreement with philosophy on most issues. In such instances, he tends to supplement his discussion of a given topic by performing *taʾwīl* in order to show how a particular set of philosophical ideas serve as "icons" or representations for corresponding realities in the World of Religion and the World of Origination.

This raises the broader question of how Nāṣir and his fellow Ismāʿīlis regarded the tradition of philosophy. In line with the general Ismāʿīlī emphasis on the distinction between the esoteric and the exoteric dimensions of reality, Nāṣir seems to have regarded philosophy as part of the more exoteric framework in need of *taʾwīl* in order to be fully understood. In this respect, Nāṣir does not regard philosophy as inherently contrary to Ismāʿīlī doctrine, but, rather, a "whiff" of it, just as the exoteric or physical realm manifests the traces of the esoteric or spiritual realm. Indeed, Nāṣir holds that all sciences and knowledge, including philosophy, derive from the Prophets (*Jāmiʿ*, ¶17, 29). Thus, while it can be said that the *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn* presents us with Nāsir-i Khusraw's attempt to reconcile philosophy and religion (i.e., Ismāʿīlī doctrine), it is equally an attempt to restore philosophy to its original state of union with revealed, prophetic wisdom. This type of restorative effort on Nāsir's part would thus be in keeping with the famous saying in early Islamic thought, "Philosophy springs forth from the niche of prophecy" (*yanbaʿu al-ḥikma min mishkāt al-nubuwwa*) (Nasr 2006, 3).

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CHAPTER 9

AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S (D. 1111) *INCOHERENCE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS*

FRANK GRIFFEL

THE relationship between the movement of Greek and mostly Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy in Arabic (*falsafa*) and the different trends of Islamic theology (*kalām*) is a complex one that cannot be easily described. Since the beginning of *falsafa* in the third/eighth century, philosophical thinkers were engaged in dialogues with theologians even if we often have little direct evidence for exchanges between these groups. Al-Kindī (d. ca. 250/865), for instance, shows a keen interest in *kalām* to the extent that there are links between Muʿtazilism and his teachings (Adamson 2007, 55, 104–5). In the case of some Baghdad Peripatetics we have evidence of direct exchanges, like the famous debate in 326/938 between the philosopher Abū Bishr Mattā b. Yūnus (d. 328/940) and the grammarian Abū Saʿīd al-Sīrāfī (d. 368/979), who was trained in Muʿtazilite *kalām*, on the merits of studying logic (Endress 1986) or ʿĪsā b. Zurʿa's (d. 398/1008) letter to a contemporary Muʿtazilite (Starr 2000). Abū Bakr Zakariyāʾ al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) was engaged in a direct exchange with Muʿtazilites of his time on questions of metaphysics and cosmology (Rashed 2000). Al-Fārābī (d. 339/950–51) was well aware of *kalām* teachings on the vacuum, for instance, and responded to them (Daiber 1983). Some of his philosophical concerns, like the one on human free will, are curiously similar to ones held by Muʿtazilites (Griffel 2009, 139). In the case of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 428/1037), we now have valuable analytical studies that document the complex interplay between *falsafa* and early *kalām* (e.g., Wisnovsky 2004).

Similarly, on the side of *kalām* we see Muʿtazilites as well as early Ashʿarites discuss and refute teachings of the *falāsifa*. They appear under various labels sometimes associated with the movement of *falsafa*, sometimes presented as teachings of groups that bear other names. The Ashʿarite *mutakallim* al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), for instance, discusses and subsequently refutes Aristotelian teachings held by people whom he identifies as "those who believe in natures" (*aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ*: al-Bāqillāni, *al-Tamhīd*, 53–66). Also, in another book devoted to the refutation of Ismāʿīlī Shīʿites but unfortunately lost, al-Bāqillānī included a chapter on people he calls *dahriyya, falāsifa*, and dualists (Griffel 2000, 169, 178f.). Overall, however, these early stages of the interplay between *falsafa* and *kalām* are not well researched. In the case of Ibn Sīnā, for instance, it is still unclear how much he took from Muslim theologians—mostly Muʿtazilites such as his contemporaries al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) or Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044)—and how much Muslim theologians before al-Ghazālī took from Avicenna. The latter were mostly Ashʿarites, such as al-Ghazālī's teacher al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), but also Twelver Shīʿites with Muʿtazilite leanings, such as al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), who discusses Ibn Sīnā's arguments in his works (*Rasāʾil*, 147–52).

Polarized contrasts between the movement of *falsafa* and Muʿtazilite as well as Ashʿarite *kalām* may therefore not be adequate even for the period before al-Ghazālī. With his oeuvre such contrasts are no longer acceptable. With al-Ghazālī, the engagement of *kalām* with *falsafa* enters a new phase that is very different from the one before. On the parallel side of the *falāsifa*, his works trigger an engagement with teachings in *kalām* that is equally very different from what happened before al-Ghazālī (Griffel 2011).

During the fifth/eleventh century, the philosophical system of Ibn Sīnā became the most potent challenge to the various theological schools of Islam that had developed in the centuries earlier. Coping with the views of Ibn Sīnā and his followers was a long process that continued for many centuries. A significant part of theological literature in Islam in its postclassical period after the fifth/eleventh century was devoted to discussing the merits and the errors of the Avicennan system. Ibn Sīnā found defenders among Muslim theologians as well as critics. Learning the system of "the philosophers" (*al-falāsifa*)—a word that came to mean Ibn Sīnā and his followers—was part of almost every advanced madrasa education up until the thirteenth/nineteenth century. What is more, right from the beginning of the discussion about Ibn Sīnā among Muslim theologians, we see that some of his teachings had a very significant influence even among those theologians who rejected his general direction of thought and who argued against it. Ibn Sīnā's explanations of prophecy, divination, and the quicker insight of some humans compared to others, for instance, were soon adapted by Muslim theologians. In this adapted and slightly changed form they had an enormous influence on how Muslims thought about prophecy and the superior insights of Sufi saints (*awliyāʾ*) or about the Shīʿite imams (Griffel 2010).

This chapter looks at a crucial stage in the early engagement of Muslim theologians with the Avicennan system that began with al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Al-Ghazālī was the first Muslim theologian we know of who explicitly engaged with the Avicennan philosophical system by discussing it extensively and trying to refute some of its elements. Al-Ghazālī was born around 447/1056 in Ṭābarān, a town in the district of Ṭūs in northwestern Iran, close to the modern city of Mashhad. He grew up in a poor family, though with some scholarly and maybe even Sufi background. Early on he moved to the intellectual center of Nishapur, where he became a student of al-Juwaynī, the most prominent Ashʿarite teacher of his time. The school of Ashʿarite theology had slowly grown out of the teachings of its eponym al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935), who started out as a Muʿtazilite *mutakallim* but was then drawn to the more scriptualist teachings of a Baghdad circle that followed Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855). Subsequently, he developed *kalām* arguments to defend some of these scriptualist teachings against their Muʿtazilite detractors. Early Ashʿarism, which remained a relatively insignificant school until it was promoted in the early fifth/eleventh century in the Iranian merchant-city of Nishapur, is characterized by its usage of Muʿtazilite argumentative techniques and a Muʿtazilite ontology, while at the same time defending the teachings of a group that self-consciously identified as "Sunnīs," that is, followers of the *sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad, meaning his actions as well as his views and teachings as they are recorded in the corpus of *ḥadīth*.

Al-Ghazālī was the most talented Sunnī theologian of his generation. This was acknowledged when in 484/1091 the vizier of the Grand Seljuq Empire, Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), appointed him to the position of head teacher at the Baghdad Niẓāmiyya madrasa. Al-Ghazālī tells us in his autobiography *The Deliverer from Error* (*al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl; Deliverer*, 77 f.) that he also became a keen reader of Sufi literature. The high moral standards he found there made him contemplate his close relationship to the state authorities of the Grand Seljuq Empire. This process let to his flight from Baghdad and the abandonment of his position at the state-sponsored Niẓāmiyya madrasa. In 488/1095 he began a two-year period of travels that ended at his hometown Ṭābarān, where he settled and taught at a small, privately funded madrasa and where he maintained a Sufi lodge (*khānqāh*). His newfound devotion to a moralistic lifestyle that was influenced by Sufi notions as well as an Aristotelian virtue ethics found its expression in his *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*), a multivolume work that he wrote soon after his departure from Baghdad. Later in life, in 499/1106, al-Ghazālī returned to teaching at a state-sponsored teaching institution and took the position of the head teacher at the Niẓāmiyya madrasa in Nishapur. At this point, however, al-Ghazālī had already broken with the Seljuq state and its institutions, and he tells us that he filled that post only begrudgingly and under severe pressure (*Deliverer*, 90–92). He died in 505/1111 at his madrasa and *khānqāh* in Ṭābarān-Ṭūs (Griffel 2009, 19–59).

Al-Ghazālī's early relation to *falsafa* is difficult to reconstruct. His later adaptation of philosophical ideas prompted much criticism, and this made him disavow whatever early attraction there may have been toward the teachings of Ibn Sīnā and other *falāsifa*. There are, however, also statements in his works that might be read as an admission that he studied the books of Ibn Sīnā early in his life, maybe under the direction of al-Juwaynī, and that they fascinated him right from the start (Griffel 2009, 30f.). Modern scholars suggest that there was a period in al-Ghazālī's early career when he was himself a follower of Ibn Sīnā. If so, his seemingly neutral report of Ibn Sīnā's teachings, *The Doctrines of the Philosophers* (*Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*), may come from that period and was later adapted as an introduction for his students that would prepare them to fully understand al-Ghazālī's refutation of Ibn Sīnā (Janssens 2003). *The Doctrines of the Philosophers* is an Arabic adaptation, thoroughly reworked at times, of one of Ibn Sīnā's Persian textbooks of logic, the natural sciences, and metaphysics, the *Book of Knowledge* *for ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla* (*Dāneshnāmeh-yi ʿAlāʾī*). There is, however, no clear proof that al-Ghazālī went through such an Avicennan period early in his career. Neither his biographers nor his enemies mention it, although the latter complain that al-Ghazālī studied *falsafa* before he had fully mastered the religious sciences. It is also possible that al-Ghazālī composed *The Doctrines of the Philosophers* later in his life, after his refutation of *falsafa*, because he realized that his students needed a more thorough preparation than what he had written before. *The Doctrines of the Philosophers* became a very successful textbook in its own right, particularly in its Hebrew and Latin translations (al-Ghazālī, *Metaphysics* and *Logica et philosophia*; Lohr 1965; Steinschneider 1893, 1:298–326).

The earlier view that al-Ghazālī composed his *Doctrines of the Philosophers* in the time period immediately before writing his *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*)—a view that is based on his own comments in his autobiography—is now largely dismissed. Al-Ghazālī's autobiography is a highly apologetic work, written in 500/1106 or shortly after in response to attacks—from both friends and foes—for taking up the teaching position at the Niẓāmiyya madrasa in Nishapur. Here al-Ghazālī tries to counter the impression that he is too deeply influenced by philosophical literature. His presentation that he studied *falsafa* for two years while teaching at the Niẓāmiyya madrasa in Baghdad 484/1091–488/1095, and that he needed a third year to write his refutation, is not credible (al-Ghazālī, *Deliverer*, 61). It is more likely that al-Ghazālī's occupation with Ibn Sīnā's philosophy began much earlier in his life and that he worked on his response for years and maybe even decades. His appointment to the very prominent teaching position at the Niẓāmiyya in Baghdad may be one of the fruits of his studies of *falsafa* rather than the beginning of it (Griffel 2009, 30–36).

One of the manuscripts of al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence of the Philosophers* mentions that the book was finished in Muḥarram 488 / January 1095. At this time, al-Ghazālī was a highly respected teacher at the Ashʿarite Niẓāmiyya madrasa. He was close both to the caliph's court in Baghdad and to that of the Seljuq sultan in Isfahan. Apart from a few shorter books in legal theory and a textbook on Ashʿarite *kalām* (al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtiṣād*), this was al-Ghazālī's first major work that he put on the book market. Together with it or soon after, he published a number of books on logic and epistemology (al-Ghazālī, *Miʿyār* and *Miḥakk*), aimed as preparations for studying the *Incoherence*, but also produced because al-Ghazālī wished to establish the study of philosophical logic at Muslim madrasas, a project that would prove to be successful.

There was once the impression among modern readers that al-Ghazālī changed some of his teachings after his flight from Baghdad later in the year he published the *Incoherence*. In the early 1990s, however, Richard M. Frank argued that there was no notable theoretical development or evolution in al-Ghazālī's theological and philosophical thought between his earliest works and his last (Frank 1994, 87, 91). Indeed, in the *Incoherence* al-Ghazālī lays down the philosophical foundations of much of what he later expresses in his theological works. Soon after the *Incoherence*, al-Ghazālī published his second major book of refutation. This was directed against the Ismāʿīlī Shīʿites and has the long title *The Scandals of the Esoterics and the Virtues of the Party of [the Caliph] al-Mustaẓhir* (*Faḍāʾiḥ al-bāṭiniyya wa-faḍāʾil al-Mustaẓhiriyya*). The two books pursue similar goals insofar as they both aim to establish in a legal argument that the *falāsifa* as well as the Ismāʿīlis are clandestine apostates (*zanādiqa*) from Islam who can be killed if they publicly teach or propagate their positions. The *Scandals of the Esoterics* is also important since it is in this book that al-Ghazālī addresses the *falāsifa*'s teachings about the authority of revelation and the political function of prophecy (al-Ghazālī, *Faḍāʾiḥ*, 153–54, partly translated in al-Ghazālī, *Deliverer*, 228; Griffel 2000, 292–97), a subject left untouched in his *Incoherence.* Comparing these two books, however, reveals that the *Incoherence* is a much more thorough work than the *Scandals of the Esoterics*, with wider-ranging aims. The legal condemnation of the *falāsifa* in that book takes only a single page, and it appears almost as an afterthought to a highly philosophical engagement with the teachings of Ibn Sīnā.

9.1. The Overall Strategy of the *Incoherence of the Philosophers*

Scholars point out that the word "incoherence" is not an accurate translation of the Arabic *tahāfut* and does not reflect the gravity of the accusation leveled against the *falāsifa* (Treiger 2011, 108–15). The Arabic term describes the philosophers' jumping into unwarranted and ill-founded conclusions that do not result from their arguments. "Precipitance" might be a more accurate translation, in the sense that the book describes the overhasty construction of a philosophical edifice that cannot last. Al-Ghazālī clearly thought of the *Incoherence* as a refutation (*radd*). The overall goal of the book is to show that the *falāsifa*'s claim of being able to prove their teachings through demonstrative arguments is unfounded and no more than a delusion.

Al-Ghazālī begins his *Incoherence of the Philosophers* with a preface and with four different introductions. Here he clarifies what prompted the writing of the book and what he wishes it to accomplish. In the preface he describes his annoyance with a group of Muslims who think they are smarter and more intelligent than the rest and who therefore believe they are not bound to perform religious duties such as praying. These people claim that they follow the teaching of the ancient philosophers Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, and their likes whom they regard as masters of all sciences. This group of Muslims says about these ancient philosophers that

> concurrent with the sobriety of their intellect and the abundance of their merit is their denial of revealed laws and religious confessions and their rejection of the details of the religions and faiths, and they are convinced that the [religious] laws are composed [by humans] and that they are embellished tricks. (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 2)

This "group" (*ṭāʾifa*), however, is not the philosophers themselves, as al-Ghazālī clarifies, or at least not their heads and leaders. Later on he will mention "the *vulgus* of the philosophers" (*jamāhīruhum*: al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 12), and he seems to have these in mind here. The "prominent and leading philosophers" are explicitly exempt from the accusation of neglecting religious duties, denying revealed religion, or teaching that religions are embellished tricks (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 2). The group al-Ghazālī complains about at the very beginning of his *Incoherence* creates a false philosophical tradition, based on the idea that the ancient philosophers were the masters of all sciences, and they follow teachings that were never popular among the prominent philosophers. The leaders among the philosophers, however, are not entirely innocent when some followers misinterpret their teachings. The leaders themselves create a myth, namely that their own teachings are proven through demonstrative arguments that render them indubitable. The *falāsifa* create the impression that they have a way to truth that is superior to all other groups and even superior to revelation.

Al-Ghazālī does not dispute the possibility of demonstrative arguments that prove their conclusions beyond any doubt. On the contrary, he endorses demonstration in his own writings on logic and he urges his peers in the religious sciences to accept this method. In an important passage in the second introduction that will be often quoted by later Muslim scientists, al-Ghazālī mocks religious scholars who dismiss the astronomers' explanation of a solar eclipse as an alignment of sun, moon, and earth. This explanation is demonstratively proven, and denying it creates more harm for religion than what its enemies could ever inflict (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 6).

Al-Ghazālī knew well that the demonstrative method is taught in books that take their teachings—and often also their titles—from Aristotle's logical works, most importantly his *Posterior Analytics*. There demonstration is described as the combination between (1) correct forms of arguments and (2) indubitable premises that are either self-evident or that have themselves been proven in earlier demonstrations. The fourteen correct forms of arguments, the syllogisms, are again described in the *falāsifa*'s books that present the teachings of Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*. Finally, how to form correct definitions and premises is clarified in books that are equivalent to Aristotle's *Categories* and the *Isagoge* of Porphyry (d. ca. 305), a book with which the study of Aristotelian logic in the *Organon* begins. Al-Ghazālī accepted this so-called instrument or tool (Greek *órganon*) of reasoning, and he adopted the demonstrative method for his own. He also accepted that it yields indubitable results in mathematics, geometry (like explaining a solar eclipse), and the natural sciences. When it comes to philosophical metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*), however, al-Ghazālī concluded that many teachings of the *falāsifa* could not be proven demonstratively. Metaphysics is the philosophical discipline most closely aligned with theology. It deals with ontology, asking how the world is structured and what are its most basic constituents, with cosmology, looking into how the basic constituents relate to one another, and finally it deals with God, His attributes, and how He relates to His creation.

In the fourth introduction of his *Incoherence* al-Ghazālī explains the overall goal of this book. He addresses the *falāsifa*'s claim that all or most of their teachings are supported by demonstrations and responds:

> We will make it plain that in their metaphysical sciences they have not been able to fulfill the claims laid out in the different parts of the logic and in the introduction to it, i.e. what they have set down in the *Posterior Analytics* on the conditions for the truth of the premise of a syllogism, and what they have set down in the *Prior Analytics* on the conditions of its figures, and the various things they posited in the *Isagoge* and the *Categories.* (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 9)

Philosophical metaphysics, al-Ghazālī continues to argue, is not based on demonstrative arguments. Rather, the arguments the *falāsifa* claim as demonstrative are faulty and do not fulfill the conditions for demonstration set out in their own books of logic. The problem lies in their premises. These are, despite the *falāsifa* claims, not indubitable. The *falāsifa* neglect to critically examine the foundations of their own thinking but accept them on the authority of their teachers and their leaders. All this amounts for al-Ghazālī to a quasi-religious attitude. The leading *falāsifa* ask their students and followers to agree on the premises they postulate without, in fact, being able to prove them. A science that uses formally correct arguments and employs premises that are unproven but agreed upon by everybody who shares in that science is, according to Aristotle, not demonstrative but merely dialectical. The religious sciences, for instance, are all dialectical since they are based on premises taken from revelation. The point al-Ghazālī makes in the above passage is that philosophical metaphysics is not superior to religious theology. Both are dialectical sciences, based on premises that its practitioners have agreed upon. But while the *falāsifa*'s agreement is a case of blind emulation (*taqlīd*) of what has been passed down from generation to generation of philosophers, the basis of theology is divine revelation.

Showing that the *falāsifa*'s arguments in metaphysics are not demonstrative serves a number of purposes for al-Ghazālī. First, it destroys the conviction of the "vulgar" followers of the philosophical movement that the *falāsifa* were masters of all sciences and more intelligent than everybody else. Rather, their arguments are far from perfect and quite often wrong. Second, it destroys the conviction of those who follow the "prominent and leading philosophers" that their metaphysics is superior to theology and can replace it. Rather, while the former is based on mere *taqlīd* of bygone authorities (Aristotle, etc.), the latter is based on divine revelation. Third, and this is not fully mentioned in the introductions but only later on in his *Incoherence*, al-Ghazālī also wants to show that many teachings of the *falāsifa* that are correct are not based on demonstrative inquiries but taken from earlier revelations, such as those of Moses or Jesus, or from the inspirational insight of the *awliyā*ʾ, "friends of God" or saints who already existed in the religions before Islam. This third goal is most clearly expressed in a passage from the fifteenth discussion of the *Incoherence*. That discussion addresses the *falāsifa*'s teachings on the celestial souls and why they move the spheres of the heavens. Al-Ghazālī disagreed with the rational explanation of the heavenly movements only on minor points, limited to *why* things are the way they are. He does, however, object that the arrangement of the heavens is a subject where rational insight is limited. Humans know what they know about the celestial movements not from observation or mathematical calculation but from another source:

> The secrets of the heavenly kingdom are not known with the likes of these imaginings. God makes them known only to His prophets and saints by way of inspiration (*ilhām*), not by way of inferential proof. (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 152)

This point is supported elsewhere in al-Ghazālī's oeuvre, like in his autobiography, where he draws on an older argument that other Muslim theologians such as the Ismāʿīlī Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/934) had applied against *falsafa* (al-Ghazālī, *Deliverer*, 85). How can the knowledge in astronomy be drawn from observation and calculation given that some celestial events are so rare that they occur only once in a thousand years? The mathematical pattern between such rare events can only be deduced with the help of divine inspiration. The same applies to medicine. How can experience lead to an understanding of how drugs work, given that quite many kill the patient if applied before humans have medical expertise? Medical knowledge comes to humans through divine inspiration, not through experiments or logical deductions.

This third goal explains why al-Ghazālī "refutes" some teachings in his *Incoherence* that he later applied in his own works. He addresses, for instance, the *falāsifa*'s explanation of the movement of stars through spheres (fifteenth discussion) or Ibn Sīnā's view that the celestial souls have knowledge of the future that some humans might be able to connect to (sixteenth discussion). In some of his later works, al-Ghazālī adopts both these teachings as his own. In the *Incoherence*, the dispute is not about the truth of these teachings but whether *the falāsifa* are able to prove them demonstratively. Unproven teachings can still be true. Al-Ghazālī aims at forcing the *falāsifa* to admit that these teachings cannot be deduced in philosophy but are taken from revelation or the insights of saints. He says in the sixteenth discussion, "The only way for this to be known would be from revelation (*al-sharʿ*) not from reason (*al-ʿaql*)" (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 157). The rational justification in philosophy is a mere construction that happened after teachings were adopted, and it does not withstand a critical investigation of the kind al-Ghazālī undertakes in his *Incoherence*.

The fact that al-Ghazālī criticizes teachings he later adopts has led to much confusion among some of his readers. Philosophers such as Ibn Rushd (Averroes, d. 595/1198) accused him of being inconsistent (Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 22). Some modern scholars think that al-Ghazālī fielded a "pseudo-refutation" (Treiger 2011, 93). A close reading of the *Incoherence*, however, reveals that al-Ghazālī is very careful in his language and nowhere takes a position that is inconsistent with those of his later works that are unanimously believed to express his opinion. It is true that in the *Incoherence* he is often polemical and sometimes unfair. There is, however, consistency among the works unanimously ascribed to him, even if he shouted out his criticism of the *falāsifa* and whispered when he thought they were correct.

After the preface and the four introductions, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* is divided into twenty discussions and these again divided into sixteen that fall in the field of metaphysics and four in that of the natural sciences. Even those in the natural sciences, however, are mostly concerned with questions of metaphysics and epistemology. If we follow the headings of the twenty discussions, then there are eight where al-Ghazālī sets out to show that the teachings discussed in that chapter are not supported by valid demonstrations and where he leaves open whether they are true or not (nos. 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19). In the remaining twelve discussions, he sets out to show that the philosophical teachings are unproven *and* wrong. Often, however, they could be easily mended if one gives up wrong premises such as the pre-eternity of the world. In some cases he accuses them of deceptively misrepresenting (*talbīs*) their teachings in ways that make them look Islamic. In three cases (nos. 1, 13, and 20) the error of the *falāsifa* is so grave as to warrant accusations of unbelief (see below).

Even in those discussions where he aims at refuting the truth of the *falāsifa*'s teachings, he often does not argue in favor of the position he thinks is true. "I do not enter into objecting to them except as one who demands and denies, not as one who claims and affirms," he writes in the third introduction of his book (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 7). Behind this strategy lies al-Ghazālī's conviction of the truth of revelation. This becomes manifest in his "rule of interpretation" that al-Ghazālī explains in some of his later works and that I will fully explain below. According to that rule, statements in the apparent meaning (*ẓāhir*) of revelation can only become subject to allegorical interpretation (*taʾwīl*) and be given an inner meaning if they are contradicted by demonstrative arguments. Without such a firm proof, the authority of revelation cannot be challenged and opinions opposed to it are considered defeated. Whenever he argues that the *falāsifa* are wrong, al-Ghazālī assumes that revelation teaches something different. Were the *falāsifa* able to prove their positions demonstratively, al-Ghazālī would be willing to reconsider his opinion about the teachings of revelation. Failing that, however, the truth of the outward sense of revelation stands against the claims of the *falāsifa*, and since the latter cannot substantiate them, revelation prevails. Much of the *Incoherence* is devoted to the task of making room for the epistemological claims of revelation.

Al-Ghazālī made his refutation of *falsafa* easy for himself. Showing that their arguments are not demonstrative refutes the hubris and dismissive religious attitude of some followers of *falsafa* and also their view that philosophy is independent from revelation. He does not need to prove where and why these teachings are *false*. In fact, they do not need to be false but only unproven. Even in those cases where al-Ghazālī sets out to refute the truth of some of the *falāsifa*'s teachings, he does not need to show they are false. He only needs to show they are unproven and contradict the outward wording (*ẓāhir*) of revelation. The way he sets out his book, most of his goals are fulfilled once al-Ghazālī has proven that the arguments he criticizes are not demonstrative. They may even be persuasive, but as long as they do not reach the high standard of demonstration, they do not, in his opinion, establish the authority of *falsafa*. The twenty discussions of this book are, therefore, often very technical disputes about the logical status of certain explanations and proofs. Their function can only be determined once the overall goal of the book as a refutation of, first, the truth of certain teachings, second, of claims of originality and the provenience of some teachings, and, third, of the exuberant self-confidence and attitude of some people is kept in mind.

9.2. THE THREE DISCUSSIONS ON THE WORLD'S ETERNITY

Although al-Ghazālī tries to give his readers the impression that he does not want to argue *for* any position in this book but merely destroy convictions held among his doctrinal enemies, the book overall does argue in favor of a certain theological position. This happens most forcefully in the first three discussions on the world's eternity. Ibn Sīnā and many philosophers before him had argued that the world has no beginning in time and will never end. Still, they maintained that the world has a Creator who is the ultimate cause of every event in this world. Philosophers like Ibn Sīnā thought of God not as someone who would create the world at one point in time out of nothing, but as the "essential cause" of the world. An essential cause is an efficient cause of a thing or event that is sufficient to bring about its existence or occurrence. Imagine a dark room with a fireplace and no other light source. Light exists in that room if and only if there is fire in the fireplace. The fire is the essential cause of light in that room; any time there is fire there is light and vice versa. The two are temporally coextensive although one is the cause of the other. Light follows with necessity from fire. This is the relationship between God and the world. The world exists as long as God exists and God cannot exist alone without the world, just as there is no fire in that room without light. God, for Ibn Sīnā, does not have a temporal priority over this world but an ontological one. He does not exist "before" the world but exists "prior" in terms of rank of being, since He causes all that is other than Him. The existence of the world follows necessarily out of God's existence.

It is this idea of God as a mere cause (*ʿilla*) of the world that triggered al-Ghazālī's opposition. The problem can he highlighted using the example of the light from the fireplace. It is in the nature of fire to emit light, and we cannot conceive of a fire that does not emit light. The fire has no choice but to emit light. Similarly, so al-Ghazālī argues, it is in the nature of Ibn Sīnā's God to create the world. Such a God exercises no choice about whether to create or not. In fact, Ibn Sīnā's God never exercises true free choice (*ikhtiyār*), or, as al-Ghazālī phrases it, there is no delay (*intiẓār*) of God's action from His essence. God becomes a creation-automat who turns His knowledge, which may be regarded as the blueprint of creation, into the world that we live in.

None of this, however, is clearly expressed by al-Ghazālī in his *Incoherence.* Like many works from this period, the *Incoherence* is a book intended to be studied with a qualified teacher, who might explain these connections. From al-Ghazālī's other works, however, and also from the understanding of later scholars in his tradition, it becomes clear that this is the issue addressed in the discussion on the world's eternity. The issue also comes up in other discussions and it is clear that this is the most important objection of al-Ghazālī against the teachings of the *falāsifa*. For him, they teach a completely impersonal understanding of God that reduces Him to a mere automated cause that has no real will or knowledge, a God to whom very few people can relate as the omnipotent and omniscient master of existence.

The first three discussions on the world's eternity make up almost a third of the *Incoherence*. Here, the character of the book as a refutation is most evident. Al-Ghazālī brings forward a great number of objections against the view that the world is or even could be eternal. The first discussion, the longest of the three, is devoted to refuting the teaching that the world is pre-eternal, that is, that it exists from eternity in the past. Although he never reveals his sources, al-Ghazālī brings a number of arguments that we are familiar with from John Philoponus's refutation of Aristotle's and Proclus's works on the world's pre-eternity (Davidson 1987, 86–127). John Philoponus (in Arabic: Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī) was a Christian philosopher of the sixth century who was active in Alexandria and who wrote in Greek.

In the course of the discussion, a disagreement about the nature of the modalities becomes most important. The modalities are "necessary," "possible," and "impossible." Ibn Sīnā treats the modalities as attributes of things or events. Something *is* possible for Ibn Sīnā, or it *is* necessary. The world as a whole is, for Ibn Sīnā, possible with regard to itself and necessary with regard to God, meaning it follows necessarily from God's existence. In his basic understanding of the modalities Ibn Sīnā followed Aristotle and went so far as to require a substratum (*maḥall*) for possibility and for necessity. All necessity resides in God, Ibn Sīnā teaches, who is the "being necessary by virtue of itself" (*wājib al-wujūb bi-dhātihi*). The substratum of possibility was found in the unformed prime matter (*hylē*) that underlies all physical creations. Since the world has always been possible, so one of Ibn Sīnā's arguments goes, the substratum of this possibility, namely prime matter, exists from eternity in the past.

Al-Ghazālī's response to this is radical in that he objects to the whole Aristotelian understanding of the modalities. Al-Ghazālī maintains that "possible" is not an attribute of a thing but a mere judgment of the mind:

> Anything whose existence the mind supposes, [nothing] preventing its supposing it possible, we call "possible," and if it is prevented we call it "impossible." If [the mind] is unable to suppose its nonexistence, we name it "necessary." For these are rational propositions that do not require an existent so as to be rendered a description thereof. (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 42)

Al-Ghazālī confronts the Aristotelian "statistical" understanding of the modalities that has thus far reigned supreme among Aristotelian philosophers with the understanding of the modalities as it has been developed in *kalām* literature. There, "possible" has been understood as a synchronic alternative; that is, something is possible if we can mentally conceive of it as an alternative to what exists in actuality or what will exist. We call something impossible if we cannot mentally conceive of it as an alternative. In his *Incoherence*, al-Ghazālī posits “alternative worlds” to the one that exists (Kukkonen 2000). This is a very powerful argumentative device, and it is applied throughout the book. If we can conceive of the world as being created at one moment in time—or sooner or later than that moment—then an omnipotent God must have the ability to actualize these possibilities. This is quite plausible for us; for reasons that we cannot get into here, however, it is hard to swallow or even to comprehend for someone trained in an Aristotelian understanding of the modalities. In the history of philosophy, al-Ghazālī’s *Incoherence* was an important step in moving away from that understanding toward the modern view of possibility as a synchronic alternative.

The *falāsifa* not only argued that the world is pre-eternal, they also claimed they can prove this demonstratively, setting all doubts to rest. If al-Ghazālī is able to convince his readers that the world *can* be created in time, he has already achieved what he set out to do, namely to show that there is something wrong with the *falāsifa*’s assumed demonstrations. In this particular case, however, he goes further and provides arguments that the world is, in fact, created in time. His main argument is that every action (*fiʿl*) must have a temporary beginning, which is again an argument developed in *kalām* literature from philosophical predecessors, such as John Philoponus. In the long discussions on the eternity of the world, al-Ghazālī aims at showing philosophically—meaning without recourse to the authority of revelation—that the world must be created in time.

9.3. Bodily Resurrection and God’s Knowledge of Particulars

Elsewhere in his *Incoherence*, al-Ghazālī is quite content to rely on the authority of revelation. In the twentieth discussion, for instance, he tries to show that there can be a creation of bodies in the afterlife. His philosophical argument is again based on mental conceivability. We can conceive of an afterlife where the souls of humans exist entirely without bodies. This is the position al-Ghazālī ascribes to the *falāsifa*, and it is possible. We can also conceive, as an alternative to this, that at one time during the long afterlife, a body—any kind of body—will be created for every soul (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 219). The fact that we can conceive of such a process means it is possible. The Qurʾānic descriptions of bodily pleasures and pains that we experience after our deaths are therefore not impossible. Here al-Ghazālī tries to force the *falāsifa* to acknowledge the authority and the truth of revelation.

Al-Ghazālī confronts the Aristotelian tradition with a nominalist or at least conceptualist understanding of the modalities, and this is an important event in the history of Western (i.e., Mediterranean) philosophy. Equally important was his novel understanding of knowledge—novel at least for the Aristotelian tradition—introduced in the thirteenth discussion. Ibn Sīnā had argued that God is characterized by total unity and therefore cannot change from one state to the next. This implies that God's knowledge only contains eternal truths, which were understood to be "universals" (*kulliyyāt*). These are genera, species, or eternal concepts, such as "humanity" or "horseness." Ibn Sīnā's God knows "particulars" (*juzʾiyyāt*), that is, individual objects and their attributes, only "in a universal way." What that meant was difficult to understand, but for al-Ghazālī it entails the—not entirely unjustified—denial of God's knowledge of individuals. For Ibn Sīnā, God cannot know individuals as individuals because if He did, His knowledge would change with each change that occurs in them, whereas change in God is impossible. Al-Ghazālī rejects this vigorously, pointing out that nobody will obey God's law if they think He does not know them and does not know their transgressions (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 136). In his philosophical response, al-Ghazālī does not reject Ibn Sīnā's premise that God does not change. His own strict monotheism prevented Him from introducing a God Whose knowledge changes. Rather, he reinterpreted the relationship between the knower and the thing known, again drawing on ideas and solutions that were developed earlier in *kalām* literature. He denies the Aristotelian understanding that "knowledge follows the object of knowledge." He replaces the identity of knower and object of knowledge with the concept of knowledge as a "relation" (*iḍāfa*) between the two. Knowledge of an object is like the relation of a stationary observer to a moving object. While the object's position relative to the knower changes, the knower does not change (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 138). This again will turn out to be a powerful objection and influence a rethinking of what knowledge means in the works of Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. ca. 560/1165) and al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191).

9.4. The Legal Condemnation of Three of the *falāsifa*'s Teachings

Al-Ghazālī believed that some teachings of the *falāsifa* make people disregard the religious law (*sharīʿa*). Writing the book was triggered by the observation that some followers of the *falāsifa* rejected performing religious rites because they deemed their ideas and their ethics above religion. The leading *falāsifa*, said al-Ghazālī, are innocent of this. He acknowledges that they see themselves as Muslims, yet even they may have fallen into unbelief. On the last page of his *Incoherence*, al-Ghazālī answers a legal question by way of a *fatwā*. Are any of the twenty teachings discussed in this book unbelief (*kufr*), punishable by death? Al-Ghazālī's legal concept behind this accusation is that whenever Muslims hold unbelief, they have implicitly rejected Islam and have become clandestine apostates, no matter whether they realize that or not. For al-Ghazālī the unbelief of a Muslim equals apostasy from Islam, a point that other jurists saw quite differently (Griffel 2001). According to a prophetic *ḥadīth*, apostasy from Islam is punished by death. Al-Ghazālī thus employed the judgment of apostasy to persecute opinions he thought could not be tolerated.

On the last page of the *Incoherence* he singles out three opinions as unbelief: that the world is pre-eternal, that God does not know particulars, and that there is no resurrection of bodies in the afterlife. The latter two directly concern people's observance of the religious law. People will not fear the punishment of God in the afterlife if they think He doesn't know them or these punishments are mere metaphors and only apply to the souls and not the bodies. Making people observe the religious law is a very important motivation in al-Ghazālī's oeuvre. It is not entirely clear, however, why he also included the first point about the world's pre-eternity. It is, of course, closely connected to the idea of a very impersonal God who creates automatically rather than by deliberation and free will. The Muslim revelation, however, nowhere explicitly teaches creation out of nothing, and al-Ghazālī was most probably aware of that. In later repetitions of his condemnation this point is often left out (al-Ghazālī, *Deliverer*, 138). Wherever he mentions it, he stresses that all Muslims agree on the world's creation in time. He may have regarded its denial as too grave a challenge to Islam and the consensus of its scholars.

Al-Ghazālī denied that the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the Muslim community could establish the truth of a certain teaching, such as the one that the world is created in time. For that one would still need to produce a valid demonstrative argument. At the same time, he thought it is possible to establish a legal verdict on the unbelief and apostasy of someone who denies creation in time based on the consensus of a scholarly community (al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtiṣād*, 207 f.). Later, Ibn Rushd understood that al-Ghazālī had condemned the teaching of a pre-eternal world because it violates the consensus of the Muslim community (Griffel 2000, 429–32). For Ibn Rushd, however, this was unacceptable because when the assumed consensus was established the opinions of the *falāsifa* among the Muslim scholars had not been taken into account (Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 12 f.).

Al-Ghazālī probably realized that the legal justification he gave for his harsh verdict at the end the *Incoherence* was thin, and in a later work he addressed the criteria that make a Muslim become an apostate in a systematic way. It is noteworthy that in this book, *The Decisive Criterion for Distinguishing Islam from Clandestine Unbelief* (*Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayna l-Islām wa-l-zandaqa*). the pre-eternity of the world is not mentioned. Here al-Ghazālī argues that clandestine unbelief and apostasy from Islam is established if a Muslim denies certain "foundations of what-to-believe" (*uṣūl al-ʿaqāʾid*), which are defined as the belief in God and in the truthfulness of His messenger Muḥammad (al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal*, 53 f., Engl. trans. in *Deliverer*, 137). The denial of God's knowledge of particulars, as well as any denial of the revealed predictions about the afterlife, violates these two foundations. Few other examples, however, are given, and the claim of a pre-eternal world never comes up in this book. In this book, al-Ghazālī also clarifies that all positions that are not condemned as apostasy are explicitly tolerated. Already on the last page of his *Incoherence* he had said that other teachings of the *falāsifa* than those three explicitly condemned may be called false, wrong, or even "undue innovation" (*bidʿa*), but they give no reason for legal charges. In his *Decisive Criterion* he reiterates this and says, "No group should tax its adversary with unbelief simply on the ground that they consider him mistaken" (al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal*, 48, Engl. trans. in *Deliverer*, 135). In those cases one may call one's adversary "led astray" (*ḍāll*) or an "innovator" (*mubtadiʿ*), but these terms have no legal relevance and would not allow other Muslims to persecute them on account of their views. All scholars who are not accused of unbelief (*kufr*) enjoy the legal protection of the Muslim community and should not be harmed (*Fayṣal*, 75–94, Engl. trans. in *Deliverer*, 143–49).

9.5. The "Rule of Interpretation" (*Qānūn al-taʾwīl*) as an Underlying Principle of Refutation

In his *Decisive Criterion*, which he wrote five to ten years after the publication of the *Incoherence*, al-Ghazālī also explains an important element in the strategy of refutation that he applies in that latter work. Al-Ghazālī formulates a general rule that permits the allegorical understanding of certain passages in the Muslim revelation. Here and in a second, much shorter work he calls this the "rule of interpretation" (*qānūn al-taʾwīl*), and as such it became known among later Muslim scholars (Griffel, 2015). It forms the bedrock of what al-Ghazālī does in his *Incoherence* even if it is not explicitly spelled out there. While the condemnation on the last page of that book determines the boundaries of tolerated positions in Islam, the rule of interpretation determines what are the correct convictions. In his *Decisive Criterion* al-Ghazālī approaches the distinction between what he sees as a correct belief and what is an incorrect one from the perspective of Qurʾān interpretation. Which verses, he asks, can and should be interpreted in a way that deviates from the literal meaning, and which verses must be understood in their literal sense? In order to establish a correct balance between the authority of the literal text of revelation and other competing sources of knowledge—most importantly the human capacity for reason—al-Ghazālī presents his "rule of interpretation" (*qānūn al-taʾwīl*). In his *Decisive Criterion* he says:

> Hear now the rule of interpretation: You learned that with regard to interpretation (*taʾwīl*) the different groups [of Islam] . . . agree that allowing [a reading that deviates from the literal meaning] depends on the production of a demonstrative proof (*burhān*) that the literal meaning (*al-ẓāhir*) is impossible. (al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal*, 47, Engl. trans. in *Deliverer*, 137)

Invoking this kind of agreement among all Muslim scholars is not only a rhetorical device. Al-Ghazālī is convinced that disputes about the meaning of revelation go back to disagreements about what can and what cannot be considered certain knowledge. All groups of Islam acknowledge that certain knowledge exists apart from revelation and may come in conflict with it. Even the most scriptualist groups among the Muslims must sometimes understand a passage in revelation in opposition to its literal wording (*Fayṣal* 41–43, Engl. trans. in *Deliverer*, 135). Most groups, however, are not aware how certain knowledge is established, and they follow no clear method. All doctrinal disputes in Islam would end, so al-Ghazālī claims, if all would acknowledge that certainty is established by demonstrative proof (*Fayṣal* 49f., Engl. trans. in *Deliverer*, 136). The criterion for applying a figurative reading depends on the "production of a demonstration" (*qiyām al-burhān*) that proves the impossibility of the outward meaning (*istiḥālat al-ẓāhir*). If an argument can be produced saying that the words in the passage in question cannot be valid in their outward meaning, and if this argument reaches the high standard of a demonstration, then these words must be understood as symbols or metaphors.

The literal and outward sense of revelation can only become subject to "interpretation" (*taʾwīl*) if a demonstration (*burhān*) shows that it is impossible. It should be clarified that for Muslim scholars like al-Ghazālī "interpretation" (*taʾwīl*) is the abandoning of the outward or literal sense. It means reading a word or a passage in revelation as a symbol or metaphor. To what the metaphor refers is again determined by a demonstrative argument. It should also be stressed that for al-Ghazālī, the text of revelation can have more than one meaning. The rule of interpretation establishes the most authoritative reading of the text and determines what kind of descriptive information the passage conveys. Once this reading is established, it allows different kind of additional meanings that may indeed be figurative (Griffel 2009, 111–16).

It has already been said that the "rule of interpretation" underlies al-Ghazālī's strategy of refutation in his *Incoherence*. Showing that certain positions, which challenge a literal understanding of passages in revelation, cannot be proven demonstratively is for al-Ghazālī identical to showing the falsehood of that position. The authority of revelation can only be trumped by a demonstrative proof; anything less than that does not invalidate its truth-claims. In all cases where positions of the *falāsifa* come in direct conflict with the outward text of revelation, their truth depends on whether or not they are supported by demonstrative proofs. If they are, according to al-Ghazālī's judgment, unproven, he may include these philosophical teachings in his *Incoherence* and point to their shortcomings. If positions of the *falāsifa* can be supported by valid demonstrative proofs, al-Ghazālī would not include them in his *Incoherence* but very likely adopt them in his own theological works.

9.6. CONCLUSION

Since the recent discovery of a text in an Iranian library, we now have a second example of a book of refutation directed against the school of Ibn Sīnā from almost the same period as al-Ghazālī. Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd Ibn al-Malāḥimī, a Muʿtazilite theologian who was active in Khʷārazm, a delta region in today's Uzbekistan where the Amu

Darya (Oxus) flows into the Aral Sea, wrote his refutation, *The Gift to the Mutakallimūn* (*Tuḥfat al-mutakallimīn*), between 532/1137 and his death in 536/1141, roughly forty years after that of al-Ghazālī (Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Tuḥfa*). Comparing these two books illustrates in drastic terms what al-Ghazālī does and what he does not do in his work. Both authors realized that Ibn Sīnā's philosophical system posed a threat to the authority of the theology they had grown up with. Their reactions to that threat, however, are quite different. Ibn al-Malāḥimī takes this challenge as an occasion to confront Ibn Sīnā's system with the Muʿtazilite one, to defend Muʿtazilism, and to argue for the truths of its teachings. His is a traditional refutation that rejects almost all teachings held by the *falāsifa* and aims at replacing them with those held by its author. The comparison with Ibn al-Malāḥimī's book shows how many teachings al-Ghazālī chose not to criticize. Al-Ghazālī accepts the *falāsifa*'s ontology of secondary causes that generate from the Creator-God and create a fully determined universe of causal chains and effects (Griffel 2009, 147–73). Ibn Sīnā's explanation of human acts as fully determined effects of such causal chains are equally not criticized. Ibn Sīnā's psychology is discussed only insofar as there are elements in it that al-Ghazālī thinks have come from earlier revelations. Finally, the lack of proper ethical teachings in Ibn Sīnā's oeuvre is nowhere mentioned by al-Ghazālī and Aristotelian virtue ethics never brought up as a subject that would raise critique. Ibn al-Malāḥimī includes all these points in his refutation. The comparison shows the great degree to which Ashʿarite *kalām*—unlike Muʿtazilism—is compatible with Ibn Sīnā's kind of Aristotelianism. Many of these teachings in Ibn Sīnā's system will simply be adopted by al-Ghazālī and appropriated in accord with the demands of Ashʿarite theology. Before doing so, however, al-Ghazālī needed to point out those elements in Ibn Sīnā's system that are unfit to be integrated into Muslim theology. This is one of the purposes of his *Incoherence*.

Philosophically, al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence of the Philosophers* was a much more significant work than that of Ibn al-Malāḥimī. It plays an important role not only in the history of Islamic theology but in the tradition of Greek and Western philosophy overall. It confronts Aristotelianism with potent challenges to its self-understanding of grounding the philosophical sciences on demonstrative proofs. Many of the argumentative objections brought forward in that book come from *kalām*, and for Aristotelians such as Ibn Rushd or Maimonides (d. 601/1204), who never mentions the book but was aware of it, the *Incoherence* remained a work of *kalām* literature. One would need to step out of Aristotelianism to fully appreciate its value. Ibn Rushd did not do that, and his own refutation of al-Ghazālī's book, *The Incoherence of the Book "The Incoherence"* (*Tahāfut al-tahāfut*) remains an often limited engagement with the latter's arguments and had little influence.

For the discourse of Aristotelian philosophy (*falsafa*) in the Islamic East, the *Incoherence of the Philosophers* was a watershed. Before it, *mutakallimūn* did not need to engage with *falsafa*. Some did, of course, but never as deeply as after the *Incoherence*. Now, *mutakallimūn and falāsifa* openly discussed the faults and merits of arguments current in the other discourse. The *Incoherence of the Philosophers* brings these two discourses together. It clearly identifies the three teachings that the jurist al-Ghazālī condemned and the larger number that the theologian al-Ghazālī objected to. In doing so, it opened the way for integrating into *kalām* those philosophical positions that are not condemned.

Hardly any Islamic philosopher after al-Ghazālī mentions the book. From the mid-sixth/twelfth century on, however, all *falāsifa* and all *mutakallimūn* show familiarity with its accusations of *taqlīd* and *talbīs* against Ibn Sīnā and his followers. They also know and react to the main points al-Ghazālī makes within the twenty discussions. One can say without exaggeration that much of what will be written in Islamic philosophy and theology from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries is a response to Ibn Sīnā's philosophical system and to al-Ghazālī's critique in his *Incoherence*.

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CHAPTER 10

ISMĀʿĪLITE CRITIQUE OF IBN SĪNĀ

Al-Shahrastānī's (d. 1153) *Wrestling Match with the Philosophers*

FRANK GRIFFEL

Al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*), a book that was completed in Muḥarram 488 / January 1095, is usually regarded as the beginning of a serious engagement of Muslim theologians with the philosophical system of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 428/1037). Earlier theologians of Islam already discussed teachings of him and respond to them in their works. None, however, wrote a book such as al-Ghazālī's, devoted entirely to the refutation of a select number of teachings by Ibn Sīnā. Al-Ghazālī's book and the arguments in it soon became widely influential, and for the next decades, if not centuries, every scholar who was doing philosophy in the Muslim world positioned himself vis-à-vis the two poles of Ibn Sīnā's original philosophical system and al-Ghazālī's objections against it.

In Ẓahīr al-Din al-Bayhaqī's (d. 565/1169–70) *Continuation to the Treasure Trove of Wisdom* (*Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*) we have a book of biographies that documents the coming together and the exchanges of those scholars who had studied philosophy from the students of Ibn Sīnā and those who came from Islamic theology and became interested and often fascinated by Ibn Sīnā's philosophical system. Al-Bayhaqī was himself a philosopher who wrote philosophical commentaries that unfortunately have been lost. He moved in the circles of philosophy and wrote his biographical dictionary around 555/1160 in Khurāsān in northeastern Iran. His book is particularly informative on the period after Ibn Sīnā, who was generally regarded as the "best of the later philosophers" (*afḍal al-mutaʾakhkhirīn*). The dichotomy of the "ancient philosophers" (*al-mutaqaddimūn*), meaning the Greeks, and the "later ones" (*al-mutaʾakhkhirūn*), meaning those writing in Arabic, emerged some time in the second half of the fifth/eleventh century. One very early appearance is in an epistle by the Avicennan philosopher and Persian poet ʿUmar al-Khayyām (d. 517/1123–24) that is dated to 473/1080–81 (al-Khayyām, *Jawāb*, 170). Although this distinction is not used by al-Ghazālī in his major works (but in one of his less well-known ones; see Griffel 2006, 17), it becomes the defining perspective for philosophical scholars at the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. The history of philosophy is divided in two major periods, that of the Greeks and that of the Arabs; and while Aristotle was the dominant figure in the first period, Ibn Sīnā came to dominate the latter. Al-Bayhaqī's *Continuation* informs us about the networks of philosophical scholars that emerged during the early part of the sixth/twelfth century; philosophers write each other letters and meet for disputations. The most significant difference to earlier periods of the history of philosophy in Islam is the emergence of the madrasa as a meeting place. Since the middle of the fifth/eleventh century, the major cities of the Saljuq Empire, such as Baghdad, Nishapur, Marw, and Herat, had state-sponsored institutions of higher learning, the so-called Niẓāmiyya madrasas. Following al-Ghazālī's turn toward studying the works of the *falāsifa*, the madrasas became hotbeds of philosophical studies (Endress 2006). Al-Bayhaqī tells us that these were the places where the prominent philosophers of the sixth/twelfth century worked and met. In those meetings it seemed to have mattered little whether the philosophers were close followers of Ibn Sīnā, who may have learned philosophy from one of his students or a student of a student, or whether they had come to philosophy via the critique of al-Ghazālī, which they may have shared. Several philosophical scholars of the early sixth/twelfth century, such as Asʿad al-Mayhanī (d. 523/1130 or 527/1132–33), who taught at the Niẓāmiyya madrasa in Baghdad, have a dual pedigree of a formal philosophical education by a teacher closely connected to Ibn Sīnā and a personal or intellectual affinity to al-Ghazālī (Griffel 2009, 71–74).

During this time, philosophers were increasingly identified by the word *ḥukamāʾ*, which initially meant "sages," rather than *falāsifa*. Following the critique of al-Ghazālī, it became clear that the word *falsafa*, which had previously been used to refer to the philosophical tradition in Islam, was now reserved for the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā. The *falāsifa* were those who followed Ibn Sīnā in his view of God as a creator who does not choose between alternatives and whose creative activity unfolds in a single action from past eternity. This was the main issue of dispute between al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā. Yet in the early sixth/twelfth century, a new kind of philosopher emerged, one who—like al-Ghazālī—would be engaged in philosophy but criticize Ibn Sīnā's view of God as too far removed from the God of the Qurʾān. "*Falāsifa*" was no longer the right name for them, and we see in al-Bayhaqī's book and others of this time the usage of the word *ḥukamāʾ* to describe a philosopher in its most general meaning. A *faylasūf* (pl. *falāsifa*) was an Avicennist, a *ḥakīm*—or rather "one of the *ḥukamāʾ*" (because the word is hardly ever used in this meaning as a grammatical singular) can be either an Avicennist or a Ghazalian, or even someone who sways between the two major camps of philosophy in the sixth/twelfth century.

One of these latter scholars was Tāj al-Dīn Abū l-Fatḥ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī. Several exchanges of letters between him and contemporary philosophers such as ʿUmar b. Sahlān al-Sāwī (d. ca. 540/1145) and al-Īlāqī (d. 436/1141) are preserved in manuscripts and yet unedited. Al-Shahrastānī's quite significant scholarly fame is based on a comprehensive doxography that documents religious divisions within Islam and faithfully reports the teachings of the Muslim sects as well as all known groups in other religions. This work, the *Book of Religions and Sects* (*Kitāb al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*) is remarkable for its treatment of religion and religious difference and its precision of documenting other people's ideas (van Ess 2011, 2:860–900). Yet al-Shahrastānī wrote at least three other major works: a compendium of Ashʿarite *kalām*, titled *The Furthest Advances in kalām* (*Nihāyat al-iqdām fī ʿilm al-kalām*), a Qurʾān commentary, *Keys to the Arcana and the Lanterns of the Godly* (*Mafātiḥ al-asrār wa-maṣābiḥ al-abrār*), and a philosophical work that is the subject of this chapter. The latter text is preserved in two manuscripts that give its title as *Book of the Wrestling Match with the falāsifa* (*Kitāb Muṣāraʿat al-falāsifa*) or simply as *Book of the Wrestling Match* (*Kitāb al-Muṣāraʿa*).

10.1. Al-Shahrastānī: An Ismāʿīlī Shīʿite in a Sunnī Garb?

Al-Shahrastānī was born 467/1074 or 469/1076 in Shahrastāna, a small settlement in a fertile valley at the edge of the Karakum desert, today on the Iranian side of the border with Turkmenistan. In the sixth/twelfth century this region was part of the rich and fertile province of Khurāsān, which was one of the intellectual centers of the Muslim world. After an early education in his hometown and in the nearby region of Khʷārazm, al-Shahrastānī moved to Ṭūs and Nishapur, the intellectual capitals of Khurāsān. There he studied at various madrasas Islamic law and theology, the latter according to the dominant Ashʿarite tradition in those cities. His main teacher in theology was Salmān b. Nāṣir al-Anṣāri (d. 512/1118), considered one of the more conservative exponents of Ashʿarism during this time. The most innovative Ashʿarite, however, al-Ghazālī, is missing from the list of his teachers despite the fact that the two may have both been at Ṭūs in the years before 500/1106.

One of al-Shahrastānī's first teaching engagements was in Khʷārazm, and a transcript of a session (*majlis*) is preserved in Persian (al-Shahrastānī, *Majlis*). In 510/1117 al-Shahrastānī left Khʷārazm to perform the pilgrimage. One of his friends was the already mentioned Asʿad al-Mayhānī—the two are from small towns in the same part of the world—who at this time was one of the assistant teachers at the Niẓāmiyya madrasa in Baghdad. He might have been involved when al-Shahrastānī got the opportunity to teach there after he had been in Mecca. Al-Shahrastānī gave courses on popular sermons (*waʿẓ*) that attracted even some of the common people in Baghdad. This, however, lasted only for three years, and in 513/1119–20 al-Shahrastānī together with Asʿad al-Mayhānī was dismissed from the Niẓāmiyya in Baghdad. This may have been the result of a political upheaval in the capital that swept away their patron. Al-Shahrastānī returned to Khurāsān, where he took an administrative position at the court of the Seljuk sultan Sanjar (reg. 511/1118–552/1157) in Marw, today in Turkmenistan. In 521/1127–28 he wrote his famous *Book of Religions and Sects* and dedicated it to a high official at that court who had become Sanjar's vizier. The book—or the dedication—may have led to his appointment as the director (*nāʾib*) of Sanjar's chancery in Marw. In 526/1131, this vizier fell out of favor, and al-Shahrastānī seemed to have moved from Marw to Tirmidh, today's Termez on Uzbekistan's border with Afghanistan. There, he rededicated his *Book of Religions and Sects* to Majd al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Jaʿfar al-Mūsawī (d. 550/1155), the leader (*naqīb*) of the ʿAlid nobility. In 536/1141, the whole region fell into turmoil when the Seljuq sultan Sanjar was defeated by an army or non-Muslim invaders, the Qarā-Khiṭāy or Western Liao, a Turkish group that had come under Chinese cultural influence. It must have been around this time that al-Shahrastānī ceased to seek patronage from high offices, returned to his birthplace, and in 538/1143–44 began to write his Qurʾān commentary, a task he probably did not complete. He died at the end of Shaʿbān 548 / November 1153 in Shahrastāna (on his life see Mayer 2009, 3–17).

We know about al-Shahrastānī's change of dedication of his main work from the preface of the *Book of the Wrestling Match*. This work is also dedicated to Majd al-Dīn al-Mūsawī and was most likely written during al-Shahrastānī's time in Tirmidh around 530/1135—certainly after he wrote his book on religions and sects as well as the theological compendium on *kalām*. These two works spread al-Shahrastānī's name as a writer of religious books, and they follow a more or less mainstream position of Sunnī theology. The book on *kalām* is indeed a very faithful exposition of Ashʿarite theology. Here he calls al-Ashʿarī his "master" (*shaykh*; al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat*, 11). The three other works of al-Shahrastānī that are preserved, however, show that he bore a secret under this Sunnī and Ashʿarite surface. Already in his early teaching session at a *majlis* in Khʷārazm, he discusses teachings that are, indeed, far from Ashʿarism. They belong to a complex of ideas that are associated with Sevener-Shīʿism or Ismāʿīlism. The same is true about his Qurʾān commentary, which offers probably the clearest indication that al-Shahrastānī was committed to the Ismāʿīlite cause. While the first document marks the beginning of his literary career, the commentary marks its end, rendering any suggestion that al-Shahrastānī's theological views underwent drastic changes futile. Rather, scholars assume that he practiced *taqiyya* during his life, a dissimulation of his true religious commitment that allowed him to take part in the culture of Sunnī madrasa education and find a career as administrator at a Sunnī court. This phenomenon is not unusual during his lifetime. Several scholars working at Sunnī madrasas and courts were suspected of being crypto-Ismāʿīlis, and for some that suspicion ended in execution (Makdisi 1963, 288).

During the first half of the sixth/twelfth century, the Islamic world was still divided between a Sunnī caliphate and a Shīʿite one. The Sunnī part had its nominal capital in Baghdad, the seat of the Abbasid caliph, but its political power was dominated by the Grand Seljuq sultan, who reigned over a territory that stretched from Anatolia almost to Northern India. The Shīʿite caliphate was that of the Fatimids in Cairo. In the early fourth/tenth century it had brought the leader of a religious underground movement to power who claimed to be the descendent of Muḥammad in the line of his daughter Fāṭima and her husband (and Muḥammad's cousin) ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661). First successful in Tunisia, the Fatimid movement seized control of Egypt in the mid-fourth/tenth century and became the most powerful state in the eastern Mediterranean. It secretly sent propagandists into the heart of the Sunnī caliphate to convert large stretches of the populace as well as dignitaries at the courts. We assume that there existed in the Seljuq Empire a secret network of propagandists working for the Fatimids and for Ismāʿīli Shīʿism, who by their enemies were often polemically referred to as *bāṭiniyya*—those that follow an arbitrary "inner meaning" (*bāṭin*) of revelation. A dispute over the succession to the caliphate in Cairo—and of the position of imam in Ismāʿīlī Shīʿism—led soon after 487/1094 to the breakaway of the clandestine network in Iran. It supported Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir as imam, who had been passed over in Cairo and who in 488/1095 openly revolted against his brother al-Mustaʿlī (r. 487/1094–495/1101). Nizār's revolt was unsuccessful and ended with imprisonment and—in 490/1097—with his death. Under the leadership of the charismatic al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124), the Ismāʿīlī organization in Iran remained committed to Nizār and ceased to communicate with the center of the propaganda activities in Cairo. Already in 483/1190, al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ had taken control of the important mountain fortress of Alamūt in the Elburz mountain range north of today's Tehran in central Iran. The Nizārī Ismāʿīlis converted many in the vicinity and built a Shīʿite state around Alamūt and in parts of Qūhistān, where they had also been successful. By the time of al-Shahrastānī, the Nizārī Ismāʿīlis had managed to found a secure principality in the midst of Iran that even the powerful Seljuq army never managed to defeat (Daftary 2007, 301–31, 335–44). The Ismāʿīlis' success was in part due to focusing on the seizure of mountain fortresses and assassinating their enemies in the Seljuq administration. All this led to a polarization between the Sunnī Seljuqs and the Shīʿī Nizāris, and whoever admitted sympathies for the latter while working for the former was suspected of high treason and had to fear for his life.

If al-Shahrastānī truly had Ismāʿīlī sympathies, he could not admit to them openly as long as he was active in Seljuq institutions and at the Seljuq court in Marw. This might explain why in his *kalām* compendium and in his book on the religious groups of his time he does not convey any open signs for such sympathies (for hidden signs in *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal* see below and van Ess 2011, 2:897–98). Both books were written in Marw in a Seljuq Sunnī environment. Once he left that city after 526/1131 and went to Tirmidh, things might have changed. His new patron was the headman or syndic (*naqīb*) of the ʿAlids, hence a Shīʿite. And although outwardly he certainly confessed to the more moderate Twelver branch of Shīʿism that was not in conflict with the Seljuq state, he may have shared at least some of al-Shahrastānī's pro-Ismāʿīlī sympathies. Once al-Shahrastānī retires to his hometown at the end of his life, dissimulation is largely given up, and the "secrets" and "mysteries" that the Qurʾān commentary unveils are very much the teachings of the Nizārī Ismāʿīlis.

This latter work, however, was only poorly distributed—it survived in a single autograph copy in an Iranian library—and might not have been available to Sunnī scholars at the time. Still, a significant number of al-Shahrastānī's contemporaries suspected his connection to the Ismāʿīlis. Al-Bayhaqī, for instance, who knew him personally, says nothing about Shīʿism or Ismāʿīlism, but he read his early *majlis* from Khʷārazm and was considerably disturbed by it (al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat*, 138). The historian al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166), who studied with al-Shahrastānī, writes that he had been accused of "heresy" (*ilḥād*) and with leaning toward "their kind of extreme Shīʿism" (al-Samʿānī, *al-Taḥbīr*, 2:160–61). Most outspoken was the historian al-Khʷārazmī (d. 568/1173), who had also met al-Shahrastānī and wrote that he had the potential of becoming a great religious leader,

> if he had not stumbled in his religious convictions and had leaned towards this heresy (*ilḥād*). We were greatly surprised that someone with such abundant talents and such intellectual perfection would turn toward a thing that has no basis and choose a cause that is not supported by evidence, neither that of reason nor that of revelation. (Quoted in Yāqūt, *Buldān*, 3:343)

These words, however, still do not spell out the heresy that al-Shahrastānī fell for, and it was only in the 1960s that researchers in Iran unearthed al-Shahrastānī's Ismāʿīlī sympathies. It took a few decades for this revised view to be accepted by scholars both in the East and in the West. The degree of commitment that he showed toward Ismāʿīlism, however, as well as how he managed to square that with the Ashʿarism he was educated in and that he put forward in some of his works, is still a largely unstudied subject.

10.2. The *Wrestling Match* in Comparison with al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence*

Nowhere in the *Wrestling Match* does al-Shahrastānī openly express pro-Ismāʿīlī sympathies, but Wilferd Madelung, the most well-informed expert on Shīʿism in this period, proposed that the type of refutation he wrote and the teachings he sets opposite to that of Ibn Sīnā are, in fact, Ismāʿīlī (Madelung 1976, 258; 2001, 3). It is most interesting that the earlier refutation of Avicennan philosophy by al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, is nowhere mentioned in this book. Madelung suggested that al-Shahrastānī "disapproved of al-Ghazālī's work because he considered it merely the product of a disputatious *kalām* theologian" (Madelung 2001, 8). Al-Shahrastānī, however, does pick up objections from that book and develops them to fit his own purposes. The practice of appreciatively quoting one's predecessor(s) was not particular widespread during this time, and al-Shahrastānī is not known as an author who would reveal the sources that he worked with. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) remarked that his *Book of Religions and Sects* depends on other works that are nowhere acknowledged there (al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt*, Arab. 39–40, Engl. 62–63). Fakhr al-Dīn does not criticize the practice of benefiting from other's work without acknowledgment—he himself did that a lot—rather that al-Shahrastānī chose the wrong books as his sources. Al-Shahrastānī's silence on al-Ghazālī may simply be due to the fact that his book is quite different from that of his predecessor.

Al-Ghazālī chose twenty subjects among the numerous teachings of Ibn Sīnā where he thought he could show that certain claims that Ibn Sīnā made—most importantly the claim that he can prove his teachings demonstratively—cannot be upheld. The *Incoherence of the Philosophers* disputes first of all the demonstrative character of many of the teachings discussed therein. In the sixth discussion of the book, al-Ghazālī explains his strategy:

> What is intended is to show your (*scil.* the *falāsifa*'s) impotence in your claim of knowing the true nature of things through conclusive demonstrations (*barāhīn qaṭʿiyya*) and to shed doubt on your claims. Once your impotence [to prove things demonstrably] becomes manifest, then one [has to take into account that] there are among people those who hold that the realities of divine matters are not attained through rational reflection (*naẓar al-ʿaql*)—indeed, that it is not within human power to know them. (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 106)

If al-Ghazālī is indeed able to show that some of the most central teachings of Ibn Sīnā cannot be proven by a demonstrative proof (*burhān*, pl. *barāhīn*), then they do not count as firm knowledge but are merely speculation. Those of Ibn Sīnā's teachings that challenge the outward meaning of revelation (i.e., the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*) could, according to al-Ghazālī, not trump its authority and would need to be dismissed in light of the truth that has been revealed. This particular attitude toward the conflict between philosophy and revelation has been dubbed "Ghazalianism," and it is expressed in al-Ghazālī's "rule of interpretation," which says that anybody who feels compelled to understand revelation in a way that deviates from its literal or outward meaning must "produce a demonstrative proof (*burhān*) that the literal meaning (*al-ẓāhir*) is impossible" (al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal*, 47, Engl. trans. in *Deliverer*, 137). A demonstrative proof is based on certain premises that are either self-evident or have themselves been proven by a demonstrative proof, and it is formed according to one of the fourteen syllogistic figures that were accepted by the logicians of the day. Demonstration produces knowledge that is certain and leaves no room for doubts. It is, according to this attitude, sufficient to prove that a certain teaching that stands in conflict with revelation cannot be proven demonstratively. This is why much of al-Ghazālī's book is dealing with whether or not Ibn Sīnā succeeds in proving his teachings demonstratively. Al-Ghazālī has achieved his goal if he manages to put doubts (Arab. *tashkīk*) into his readers about the truth of some of Ibn Sīnā's key teachings. Those doubts reveal that these teachings are not demonstratively proven. Al-Ghazālī's strategy also does not require that he reveals his true opinion about the teachings he discusses in the book, an omission, indeed, bemoaned by many of his readers.

Al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match* is quite different. In the introduction he says that he will "wrestle" with Ibn Sīnā, "the most learned of the age in philosophy," in regard to seven issues, all of them in the field of metaphysics and philosophical theology (*ilāhiyyāt; Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 5, Engl. 21). This "wrestling" is about the truth of Ibn Sīnā's teachings and not about its demonstrative character. The book has only five discussions plus a few scattered remarks at the end, and its author apologizes for failing to complete the sixth and seventh one because he was diverted by a distress "that weighted heavily on me, consisting in the trials (singl. *fitna*) of the time and blows of misfortune" (Arab. 120, Engl. 91). A *fitna* is a public and not a private event, and these words might well be a reference to the defeat of the Seljuq army by the non-Muslim Qarā-Khiṭāy in 436/1141 and the turmoil and uncertainty this created in Transoxania and Khurāsān. The five existing chapters deal with (1) the way Ibn Sīnā divides "existence" (*wujūd*), (2) the way Ibn Sīnā proves God's existence as the "being necessary by virtue of itself," (3) the way Ibn Sīnā proves God's unity and simplicity (*tawḥīd*), (4) what Ibn Sīnā has to say about God's knowledge (which will not be discussed in this chapter due to lack of space), and (5) Ibn Sīnā's teaching that the world exists from past eternity. These chapters are all organized in a similar way: First, al-Shahrastānī begins with a report of Ibn Sīnā's position on the matter in question, often quoting his works verbatim or in paraphrase. Then follows a longer passage of "objections" (singl. *iʿtirāḍ*) to Ibn Sīnā's positions, often subdivided into major arguments. Finally, al-Shahrastānī presents "the true choice" (*al-mukhtār al-ḥaqq*) or "that what is considered true" (*al-muʿtaqad al-ḥaqq*), in an apparent deliberation about the strength of the original position against the objections. In truth, however, the "choice" reflects very much those objections that he has presented in the strongest terms.

Some of those five subjects had also been addressed by al-Ghazālī. He has three long discussions at the beginning of his *Incoherence* that deal with the pre-eternity (*qidam*) of the world, the last subject in al-Shahrastānī's book. Al-Ghazālī also discusses Ibn Sīnā's teaching on God's knowledge and the way the latter proves God's complete unity (*tawḥīd*). In two of these teachings—the pre-eternity of the world and the way Ibn Sīnā thinks of God's knowledge—al-Ghazālī condemned Ibn Sīnā and those who follow him on these subjects of unbelief (*kufr*) and apostasy punishable by death (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 226). Al-Shahrastānī is not interested in such a legal judgment. In fact, despite his many objections to what Ibn Sīnā has done, it is clear that he values the latter and considers his teachings an important contribution to the philosophical and theological project of finding true knowledge about God. His *Book of Religions and Sects* includes in its third part a fully fledged history of philosophy, divided into the philosophy of the ancient Greeks (*al-mutaqaddimūn*) and that of the "modern" Arabs (*al-mutaʾakhkhirūn*). While al-Shahrastānī is meticulous in reporting the teachings of every individual Greek philosopher, he uses a quite different approach with regards to the Arabs. Here, he simply lists eighteen names of scholars and says that "the most knowledgeable of them is . . . Ibn Sīnā, and . . . since his method is the most precise within this group and his way of thinking on what is true the most profound, I choose to report his method from his books [only]" (al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 2:348). He continues with a full hundred pages of report on the teachings of Ibn Sīnā in logic, metaphysics, and the natural sciences.

Al-Shahrastānī's close engagement with philosophy was noted at his time and also criticized by his contemporaries. The already quoted historian al-Khʷārazmī wrote that al-Shahrastānī, "concerned himself much with the murky matters of philosophy . . . and went to great length to support the teachings of the philosophers and defend them" (quoted in Yāqūt, *Buldān*, 3:343). Al-Bayhaqī, who was himself part of the philosophical movement and who knew more about the different groups within it, remarks that al-Shahrastānī, "did not walk on the path of the philosophers (*al-ḥukamāʾ*)"—here probably meaning Ibn Sīnā and his followers. In fact, al-Bayhaqī, in a conversation with him, compared al-Shahrastānī's own approach of trying to bring together the religious law (*sharīʿa*) with philosophy (*ḥikma*) with what al-Ghazālī had done a generation earlier. Al-Bayhaqī's conclusion that nobody had done this better than al-Ghazālī made al-Shahrastānī quite angry (al-Bayhaqī, *Tatimmat*, 137–40).

Al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match* was written around forty years after al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence*. Even if al-Ghazālī wanted to make his students and followers acquainted with the teachings of Ibn Sīnā and benefit from his scientific rigidity, he did not want them to study Ibn Sīnā's works in the original. Al-Ghazālī never quotes books of Ibn Sīnā or even mentions their titles; he rather paraphrases Ibn Sīnā's texts and presents them in his own words. If, however, he wanted to keep Ibn Sīnā's text out of the madrasa, al-Ghazālī failed. Once he had introduced the teachings of Ibn Sīnā to his madrasa students, the floodgates opened and the next generation diligently read, studied, and discussed the latter's works. As a result, al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match* is a much closer and much more detailed engagement with Ibn Sīnā's writings than al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence*. Al-Shahrastānī fully identifies the books of Ibn Sīnā's that he works with (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 3, Engl. 20), quotes them verbatim, and quite often says that, given his stated aims, Ibn Sīnā should have expressed things differently in his works. Unlike al-Ghazālī's intended readership, al-Shahrastānī's readers closely studied Ibn Sīnā's books. One of the main differences between al-Ghazālī and al-Shahrastānī is that while the former disputes with Ibn Sīnā only on the level of his teachings, the latter also disputes on the level of his texts and how he presents these teachings. Ibn Sīnā simply "ought to have said" such and such given his stated aim. Here, al-Shahrastānī criticizes Ibn Sīnā's on the semantic level of what words ought to mean (Jolivet 2000, 280–81, 286, 289).

10.3. Al-Shahrastānī's Ismāʿīlī Objection to Ibn Sīnā: God Is Absolute Transcendence

Behind many of these technicalities stands, however, a serious and potent philosophical dissent. This is indeed the main objection of al-Shahrastānī to all of what Ibn Sīnā does in his works. “The key thesis espoused by al-Shahrastānī in this work,” so Madelung in his analysis, “is the absolute transcendence of God above all being and comprehension as taught by the Ismaʿili tradition” (Madelung 2001, 3). When Ibn Sīnā divides “existence” into various of its kinds, he means existence in the most general sense as “existence insofar as it is unqualified existence (*wujūd muṭlaq*)” (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 11, Engl. 24). This includes everything in the world of creation as well as the Creator himself. In fact, one of the first divisions of existence that Ibn Sīnā introduces is that between an existent that is necessary by virtue of itself (*wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātihi*) and existents that are by themselves only contingent, that is, possible and not necessary (*mumkin al-wujūd*). The first is, in Ibn Sīnā’s classification of existence, a description of God and the latter of His creation. Al-Shahrastānī objects to this inclusion of God within that what “existence” describes. He says that Ibn Sīnā should not have attempted to find something that God has in common with His creation. What they have in common, according to Ibn Sīnā, is existence (*wujūd*). According to al-Shahrastānī, however, God has nothing at all in common with His creation, not even existence. This is why he so vehemently barks any time that Ibn Sīnā comes up with divisions that include God among the objects that are divided. Ibn Sīnā, for instance, also divides existence into substances (singl. *jawhar*) and accidents (singl. *ʿaraḍ*). But here, al-Shahrastānī argues, Ibn Sīnā should have made clear that this division only applies to God’s creation and not to God Himself. Even Ibn Sīnā agrees that God cannot be divided into something substantial and something accidental. This reveals to al-Shahrastānī that God is not properly part of the first divisions of existence; rather He stands outside of that.

Madelung is, of course, right to point out that this objection is motivated by al-Shahrastānī’s sympathies with Ismāʿīlī theology. From the beginning of their movement in the mid-third/ninth century, Ismāʿīlī Shīʿites had developed a cosmology that was heavily influenced by a set of Neoplatonic ideas and that interpreted God’s divine unity (*tawḥīd*) in a radical way. For Ismāʿīlī philosophers and theologians, *tawḥīd* meant that God is absolutely transcendent and cannot in any way be part of this world. He is beyond being and beyond knowability. God’s absolute transcendence makes it impossible that He causes anything in His creation, since that would require some immanence on His part.

From the early fourth/tenth century onward, Ismāʿīlī cosmologies follow a common pattern, one where God creates a universal intellect by means of His “command” (*amr*). This intellect is the “predecessor” (*al-sābiq*) from which the universal soul, which is also referred to as the “follower” (*al-tālī*), emanates. Matter, form, and the elementary components of the world all emanate from the universal soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyya*). Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (d. ca. 365/975), the most important Ismāʿīlī author of this period, describes creation as a single act of “origination” (*ibdāʿ*) wherein the whole world is put into being. Everything that happens in creation proceeds from this one action: nothing is left out, and nothing can be added or removed at a later time. God issues a single “command” that manifests itself as an intellect. This “command” is the cause of creation (Walker 1993, 82–86).

Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. ca. 411/1021), who was active in the generation after al-Sijistānī and who may have been one of his students, teaches a similar cosmology, but he adopted al-Fārābī’s model of intellects as secondary causes. Unlike the Aristotelian al-Fārābī, however, al-Kirmānī rejects the idea that the highest of these intellects emanates from God, since divine transcendence prevents such a continuing relationship (Walker 1999, 85–89). In a single act of origination and creation ex nihilo (*ibdāʿ wa-ikhtirāʿ*), God constituted the first intellect, which from then on acts autonomously. Given that God is unknowable, this first intellect is the highest being to which humans can relate, and it is the being that the Qurʾān refers to as “God” (*Allāh*). The God of revelation is not a real deity, but rather the true God’s first creation. Additionally, this is the being the philosophers and theologians refer to as “God.”

The nine other celestial intellects of the Farabian cosmological system and the sublunar world of generation and corruption emanate from this first and universal intellect. Al-Kirmānī retains the philosophical concept that the world is the necessary product of the First Principle (*al-mabdaʾ al-awwal*), which stipulates that the universe emanates according to its essence. However, he adds the idea that this First Principle is, in fact, the first creation (*al-mubdaʿ al-awwal*) of an incomprehensible God. God created this first intellect “in one go” (*dufʿat*^{an} *wāḥidat*^{an}), under particular circumstances (*kayfiyya*) that cannot be known to humans (de Smet 1995, 110–53, 159–76, 187–99). The Ismāʿīlī cosmologies of al-Sijistānī and al-Kirmānī tried to respond to the implication—following from the notion that causes are necessarily related to their effects—that if God is causally related to the world, the latter is a necessary result of Him (de Smet 1995, 138–40; Walker 1993, 84–85). Al-Kirmānī, for instance, denied that God is the agent or the efficient cause (*fāʿil*) of the world. He consciously disagrees with the *falāsifa* when they teach that God is the “first cause” of the world (Baffioni 2007, 19). Al-Kirmānī rejects declaring a causal necessity in the relationship between God and the universe. Ismāʿīlī thinkers allowed causal relations to proceed only from the first intellect downward. The relationship between the highest intellect and God is not causal.

Al-Sijistānī and al-Kirmānī were the grand masters of Ismāʿīlī and of Fatimid cosmology and metaphysics and they are associated with the “old call” (*al-daʿwā al-qadīma*) that was directed from Cairo toward Iran and Iraq. Once al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ had broken with the center of propaganda activities in Cairo, he and his followers developed the “new call’ (*al-daʿwā al-jadīda*) that introduced certain modifications. One of our most informative sources of this new Ismāʿīlī theology is al-Shahrastānī himself in his *Book of Religions and Sects.* He most probably had met al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ before the latter’s death in 518/1124. There is evidence of a dispute between the two, where al-Shahrastānī accuses al-Ḥasan and his followers of not being serious enough about theology and philosophy and trying to avert disputes by simply saying that their God “is the God of Muḥammad.” On al-Ḥasan’s side, he seems to have bemoaned that al-Shahrastānī did not fully accept his authority in matters of theology and that he would let the rationalism of philosophy interfere with following the “new call.” According to al-Shahrastānī in his *Book of Religions and Sects*, al-Ḥasan had told him: “You say: ‘Our God is the God of the intellects,’ and he meant whatever an intelligent person is led to by reason" (al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:152; van Ess 2011, 2:869–70; Madelung 2001, 4).

Al-Shahrastānī's report of the "new call" of al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ in his *Book of Religions and Sects* clarifies that there were no differences in cosmology between what was "new" and "old" (al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:150–52). It is remarkable, however, that al-Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ refers in passing to God as the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) whose existence is concluded from the world's contingency (*jawāz*; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:151.13). This is clearly reminiscent of Ibn Sīnā. Still, Avicennism and Ismāʿīlī theology do not go well together. The major Ismāʿīlī objection to the cosmology and metaphysics of Aristotelians like al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā were the same during the days of al-Kirmānī at the turn of the fifth/eleventh century and, more than a hundred years later, in al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match*: Do not make God part of this world! He is radically different from His creation, and this even includes the way He *is*. He cannot be called "existent" the way we call any created being existent.

In the first chapter of al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match* that criticism is voiced by saying that Ibn Sīnā should, in his division of existence, have left out the Divine. Al-Shahrastānī presents an alternative to Ibn Sīnā's divisions that he claims does a better job. Here, "existence" only applies to created things. The most general division of existence is into three parts: (1) into something that inheres (*ḥāll*) in something else, (2) into something that is a substrate (*maḥall*) for something inhering in it, and (3) into something that is neither inhering nor a substrate but which "stands on its own" (*qāʾim bi-nafsihi*). The first group consists of corporeal shapes and of accidents and the second of prime matter (*hylé*) and of substances (sing. *mawḍūʿ*), which are, first of all, forms (singl. *ṣūra*) that together with prime matter produce bodies. The most interesting group in this first division is, however, the third one of things that "stand on their own" and do not inhere in anything, nor does something inhere in them. Here al-Shahrastānī mentions "the Active Intellect, the Dispenser of Forms" (*al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl al-wāhib li-l-ṣuwar*) and all the other heavenly souls, which are as numerous as the celestial spheres, but also the souls "which manage terrestrial bodies," that is, animals and humans. While animal souls die with the death of the animal, human souls do not (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 18–21, Engl. 30–32). Although al-Shahrastānī's claims that this division is much clearer than Ibn Sīnā's, it leaves many questions open. Much of it is inspired by Aristotelian divisions as we find them in Ibn Sīnā, but the major difference in this prime division of existence is the third group, those things that stand on their own, which are intellects and souls (Jolivet 1997, 448–50). The most important member of this third group is "the universal soul" (*al-nafs al-kulliyya*), which has a "universal intellect" (*ʿaql kullī*), "from which emanates the absolute good (*al-khayr al-muṭlaq*) upon everything by the medium of the soul . . . as an ordered series connected to the command (*amr*) of the Creator" (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 22, Engl. 32). Here al-Shahrastānī does the same as al-Kirmānī: he adapts an Aristotelian cosmology to explain the "intensely transcendentalist theology" (Mayer 2009, 15) of Ismāʿīlism.

10.4. The Equivocal Character of Predicating the Divine

Al-Shahrastānī's criticism of including God in divisions of existence had, however, been anticipated by Ibn Sīnā and by philosophers before him. Aristotelian philosophers like Ibn Sīnā had looked into whether the predicate "existent" applies to God the way it applies to the created world. Prompted by a passage in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1003a33–b19), Greek commentators such as Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. 200 CE) and Porphyry (d. ca. 305 CE) had discussed whether "existence" is a predicate that applies to all beings alike or rather in a different way. And if it applies differently, is there more than one meaning of "existent," or are these different usages of the word connected (Treiger 2012, 332–340)? In Arabic philosophical literature, this debate is over whether "existence" is a univocal term, an equivocal term, or something in between. If "existence" is univocal (Arab. *mutawāṭiʾ, bi-tawāṭuʾ*), then there is only one meaning of the word, which applies synonymously to all things that are existent. If the word is equivocal (Arab. *mushtarak, bi-shtirāk*), then it has more than one meaning, like the English word "bank," which can be a place to sit on or an institution that lends money. These two usages are only etymologically connected and mean two very different things. While quite a number of philosophers argued that God's existence is the same kind of existence that we have, which means the term is univocal, the position that God's existence is totally different from ours—as a park bench is different from a credit institute—was rarely taken. It does not surprise, however, that this is precisely what al-Shahrastānī argues for.

Ibn Sīnā tried to take a position in the middle of these two extremes. Again, triggered by developments in Greek commentaries on Aristotle, he argues that "existence" is a modulated term (*mushakkik, bi-tashkīk*) that applies to some things in greater degree and to some things in lesser (Treiger 2012, 342–363). The Arabic *mushakkik* literary means "ambiguous," and this is how Toby Mayer translates this and related terms in his otherwise excellent English rendering of al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match*. The term's philosophical connotations are, however, better expressed by the established terminology of modulation. "To modulate" means to vary in strength or, for instance, to vary the amount or the degree of something in something else. If "existence" is a modulated term, then some things have more of it, or maybe have it to a stronger degree than others. This is already true in the world of creation. Those beings that are at the upper ends of the "chains of existence," which are chains of secondary causes that all begin in God, give some of the existence they have to those at the lower ends. Subsequently, they should have "more" existence or have it to a stronger degree. The source of all existence in the world, God or the Being Necessary by virtue of itself, has, according to Ibn Sīnā, an infinite amount of it that "overflows" (*afāḍa*) onto creation. Given this high degree of quantitative difference, it is also qualitatively different when it comes to existence. Ibn Sīnā teaches that whereas all beings other than God are composed of (1) an essence or quiddity (*māhiyya*) that defines the "what" of a thing and of (2) existence that is different from this quiddity, no such difference exists in God. In Him essence and existence are one and the same.

This language of amounts and degrees is, however, a modern one, and Arabic philosophers rarely apply it. They discussed this in terms of whether "existence" is univocal, equivocal, or modulated (*mushakkik*). Al-Ghazālī does not touch upon this debate, neither in his *Incoherence* nor—it seems—in any of his other works, and we can assume that he did not object to Ibn Sīnā on the modulation of existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) given that this position does not violate directly any Ashʿarite convictions. While it is true that the modulation of existence is not at the center of Ibn Sīnā's oeuvre, we do know that it attracted the interest of some of his followers and is mentioned, for instance, by ʿUmar al-Khayyām in a brief epistle, reporting Ibn Sīnā's teachings on existence (al-Khayyām, *Ḍarūrat*, 178–79). Al-Shahrastānī introduces the distinction of univocal, equivocal, and modulated in the second chapter of the *Wrestling Match* on Ibn Sīnā's proof for God's existence as the Being Necessary by virtue of itself. He points to four inconsistencies (sing. *tanāquḍ*) in Ibn Sīnā's presentation of the proof and two invalidations or rejections (*ibṭāl*). Al-Shahrastānī rejects Ibn Sīnā's basic distinction into necessary by itself and contingent by itself (*mumkin bi-dhātihi*), and subsequently he also rejects the proof that Ibn Sīnā tried to build on it (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 30–31, Engl. 36–37). In the section on the "true choice" he clarifies that one does not need philosophical proofs for God's existence, because the Creator "is too well known to exist to be pointed to by anything, and the recognition of Him (Exalted is He!) is through immediate knowledge (*fiṭrat*^{an})," in a way that one would not need to formally argue for (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 60, Engl. 55). To this rejection of the proof, however, al-Shahrastānī presents a counterobjection of Ibn Sīnā's taken from his book of *Discussions* that he held with his students (Ibn Sīnā, *Mubāḥathāt*, 218–19). There Ibn Sīnā said that existence is not a univocal but a modulated term. Al-Shahrastānī, probably unaware of the late-antique background of this teaching, rejects this as Ibn Sīnā's own invention. "This is not in the logic of the philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ*)," he writes, "nor will it protect him" (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 33, Engl. 38). Even if it were an authentic division, al-Shahrastānī denies that it can be applied to existence. One can say that a statement has more truth or less, or one thing is more a cause than another, but one cannot say one thing is more existent than another. Even if one would accept such talk and thus accept that there could be modulation in existence, it would still not apply to God: "It is not the case that existence is common to them both [*scil.* the created and the Creator] with some sort of generality" (Arab. 33, Engl. 38). Ibn Sīnā and his followers make the mistake of regarding existence as the most general of all genera. But it is not; rather the predicate "existent" does not apply to God the way it applies to everything in this world. In fact, human language often applies equivocal terms to refer to God. Revelation calls God "the Judge," without God responding to two appellants in court, or it calls Him "the Truth" (*al-ḥaqq*) in the way that He manifests it and not in the way that He argues for it, as we do.

> So existence and nonexistence, necessity and contingency, unity and multiplicity, knowledge and ignorance, life and death, right and wrong, good and bad, power

> and impotence, are contraries—and exalted be God above contraries and rivals! (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 42, Engl. 43)

Human language simply cannot grasp God (Arab. 27, Engl. 35). This is also the takeaway from al-Shahrastānī's discussion of Ibn Sīnā's attempt to prove God's oneness and His simplicity. Divine oneness and simplicity (*tawḥīd*) is a cornerstone of Ismāʿīlī theology, and Ibn Sīnā's arguments for a completely simple being that cannot undergo change and can only produce one kind of action does not grasp what *tawḥīd* means when applied to God:

> "Being One" (*al-waḥda*) is applied to God . . . and to existents purely equivocally (*bi-l-ishtirāk al-maḥḍ*). He is one unlike the [created] ones (*al-āḥād*) just mentioned. [He is] One [so that] the two opposites, oneness and multiplicity, both emanate from Him. [He is] One in the sense that He gives existence to those things that are one. He was unique in Oneness, then He made it overflow on His creation. (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 62, Engl. 56–57)

Given his commitment to the Neoplatonic principle that a completely simple being can only cause another completely simple being, Ibn Sīnā cannot explain how his God can ever be the creator of multiplicity in this world (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 52–59, Engl. 49–55). The real God, however, is completely simple, and He is also the source of multiplicity in this world. Al-Shahrastānī suspends judgment on whether multiplicity comes into this world through His direct interaction with it or—as earlier Ismāʿīlī theologians have taught—through a single act of "origination" (*ibdāʿ*; *Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 62–63, Engl. 57).

Ibn Sīnā's way of talking about God and analyzing His existence is for al-Shahrastānī nothing less than anthropomorphism. Ibn Sīnā subjects God to categories that apply to humans and to created beings, but not to God. This is most clearly expressed in the fifth chapter on the temporal creation of the world. Al-Shahrastānī understood that for Ibn Sīnā, time is a measure of existence. As long as there is existence there is time. God, therefore, exists from an endless time in the past. Al-Shahrastānī argues that since God is not "existent" the way we know it, He is not subject to time. This position, in fact, destroys Ibn Sīnā's view on the world's pre-eternity since for him the world exists as long as God exists, namely an infinite amount of moments in the past.

For al-Shahrastānī, to assume that God is subject to time means to commit the same kind of mistake that heretic anthropomorphists commit when they assume God has a body. Here he refers to the theological group of the Karrāmiyya, which was a significant Muslim sect in Khurāsān and Afghanistan up to the eighth/thirteenth century. They were known—or rather accused—of holding anthropomorphic positions with regard to God and assuming He has a body. Unfortunately, hardly any texts of their own have survived, so that it is hard to determine their real teachings (Zysow 2011). For al-Shahrastānī, the "Karrāmiyya" are a mere cipher for a crude and ignorant theology that cannot imagine that categories like space or time do not apply to God. Ibn Sīnā is, according to al-Shahrastānī, almost as naive and ignorant as the Karrāmiyya when he assumes God is subject to time. For al-Shahrastānī the created world is not "with God" in time, "since that would assume His existence is temporal" (Arab. 102, Engl. 81). Al-Shahrastānī argues that this mistake is prompted by assuming the univocity of a term. The Arabic word "continuity" or "perpetuity" (*dawām*), which al-Shahrastānī accepts as a description of God, is not univocal and "is not with a single meaning in two existences, but with two meanings different in their real meaning (*ḥaqīqa*)." Mistakenly assuming the univocity of an equivocal term is a common mistake that leads thinkers into error, he says, stressing that "most of the divergences between scholars arise from the equivocity of terms" (Arab. 100, Engl. 79).

10.5. AGAIN COMPARING AL-SHAHRASTĀNĪ'S WRESTLING MATCH WITH AL-GHAZĀLĪ

Apart from this main objection in the fifth discussion that God is not temporal and this world not "with Him" in time, al-Shahrastānī also argues that time itself cannot be endless. It is here that his argumentative goal meets with al-Ghazālī's, who in the *Incoherence* fielded several arguments against the infinity of time in the past. Some of these arguments are known to come from John Philoponus's (d. ca. 570 CE) refutation of Aristotle's and Proclus's works on the world's pre-eternity (Davidson 1987, 86–127). John Philoponus (in Arabic: Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī) who was a Greek-writing Christian philosopher active in Alexandria, objected that the number of rotations that any given celestial sphere has performed in the past cannot be infinite. If it were, how could the number of rotations now be distinguished from those in the future, when more have been added to it? Most of Philoponus's arguments that we find in al-Ghazālī *Incoherence* and in al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match* benefit from the common assumption that an actual infinite is impossible, meaning no given aggregate can have an infinite number of members at one time. Philoponus's argument about the impossibility of an infinite number of rotations in the past aims at converting this number of past events into an actual infinite. Without mentioning Philoponus or al-Ghazālī by name, al-Shahrastānī pursues the same strategy. If there can be no actual infinite—thus also no infinite space—then there can be no infinite time. In both cases, in space and in time, one can *imagine* an infinite, but, "since the proof is established that an infinite body is impossible," space, which is the measure of volume that all bodies have, cannot be infinite. "Likewise the intellect postulates a time or an existent temporally prior to the world—however on condition that it can be finite, for an infinite time is impossible" (Arab. 105, 107; Engl. 82, 84–85).

Comparing al-Shahrastānī's rejection of Ibn Sīnā's position that the world exists from past eternity with that of al-Ghazālī reveals how much more thoroughly the latter analyzed and discussed Ibn Sīnā's thought. In the typical style of a *kalām* work, al-Ghazālī first presents Ibn Sīnā's teaching, then his own objections, and then again counterobjections from Ibn Sīnā, and so on. This leads to a very deep engagement not always found in al-Shahrastānī. One example is al-Shahrastānī's argument for temporal creation from an infinite number of past souls. Ibn Sīnā teaches that human souls come to exist with birth and continue to exist after the death of the human's body. If past time is infinite and if human souls continue to exist indefinitely, then the number of human souls currently existing—souls of past and of present humans—must be infinite. Thus, the sum of all human souls is an actual infinite (Arab. 106–7, Engl. 83–84). If confronted with this objection, Ibn Sīnā would have acknowledged it, but he would have said that this particular kind of actual infinite is, indeed, possible. These souls neither exist spatially nor materially. Since they are purely immaterial, their number can be infinite. From the way al-Ghazālī argues in the twentieth discussion of his *Incoherence*, it is clear that he was aware of Ibn Sīnā's position (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 219). He therefore refrains from using this argument against Ibn Sīnā's teaching that the world is pre-eternal (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 19, 80–83). Al-Shahrastānī also knows of Ibn Sīnā's response (*Muṣārāʿa*, Arab. 95, Engl. 76), yet he does not mention it in the context of objecting to a pre-eternal world. Rather, he insists on the impossibility of an infinite number of souls and illustrates his position vividly. This gives the impression that he is out for quick and ultimately superficial victories, arguing with a weak straw man rather than with the real Ibn Sīnā and his followers.

For al-Ghazālī, the proof that this world cannot be pre-eternal is the cornerstone of his rejection of Ibn Sīnā's position on God. Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā's main dispute is on whether God acts with a free will and chooses between alternatives or not. If God acts out of the necessity of His existence, as Ibn Sīnā argues, the world must be pre-eternal. If He chooses between alternatives, as al-Ghazālī argues, the world was created at a time of His choosing. At stake is whether God is an impersonal conglomerate of rules and principles, as Ibn Sīnā, argues, or the God of the Qurʾān, as al-Ghazālī says, who makes deliberate decisions and cares for His creatures. Al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match* seems to stand outside this debate. The Ismāʿīlis thought that God is so transcendent from this world that categories such as "acting out of necessity" or "freely choosing" do not apply to Him at all. Their God was certainly not the God of the Qurʾān—as al-Ghazālī would have demanded—but also not the Necessary Existent by virtue of itself of Ibn Sīnā. If anything, this God is an "existentializer" (*mūjid*), clarifies al-Shahrastānī, "a preponderator of existence over non-existence," and he objects even to Ibn Sīnā's characterization of God as the necessitator (*mūjib*) of things in this world (*Muṣāraʿa*. Arab. 110–111, Engl. 86–87).

Eventually, however, al-Shahrastānī sides with al-Ghazālī. His training in Ashʿarite theology is evident in his book. For Ashʿarites, God's will is the ultimate determinant of everything in this world. In the very last part of his book, al-Shahrastānī asks how Ibn Sīnā can possibly explain why this world is not bigger or smaller. In his *Metaphysics*, Ibn Sīnā often stresses the role of final causality and that all of God's creatures strive to become as much like Him as possible. Yet many things in this world need an efficient cause that simply determines their measure:

> As for the size of forms and shapes in regard to smallness and largeness, the less and the more, and particularity and influence—they require causes consistent with them. (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 124, Engl. 94)

The cause for these measures, so goes al-Shahrastānī's implicit answer, is God's will. It determines all quantities in this world, just as much as anything else. Another example is the place of the two poles in a sphere. Ibn Sīnā teaches that particularly in the heavenly world of spheres, everything follows with necessity out of first principles. Al-Shahrastānī asks: "Then when the sphere moves, two opposite poles are in evidence. So what is it which necessitates the specification of the two poles in the place which they are now in—the parts of the sphere being indistinguishable and equal and one part no more suitable than another?" (Arab. 128, Engl. 95). One is reminded of al-Ghazālī's rejection of Ibn Sīnā's determinism with the example of a man sitting in front of two glasses of water. If Ibn Sīnā's God were this thirsty man, who is given two glasses of water that are identical to one another and equal in their position to him, He could not decide which one to choose between these two identically options and would die of thirst. For al-Ghazālī, will (*irāda*) is the capacity to distinguish one thing from another that is exactly similar to it (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 22–23). Here, al-Shahrastānī sides with him and the Ashʿarites and declares that Ibn Sīnā's attempt to explain this world mostly through final causality simply does not work (Arab. 126–127, Engl. 95). The world needs a divine will as the ultimate indeterminable determiner.

10.6. Conclusions

What remains of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy after al-Shahrastānī's thorough criticism? Certainly less than after al-Ghazālī's criticism in his *Incoherence*. Ibn Sīnā's matrix of division into necessary and contingent as well as by-virtue-of-itself and by-virtue-of another is rejected. If these predicates apply at all, it is only to created beings. All of Ibn Sīnā's teachings on God, whom he calls the Being Necessary by virtue of itself, are not applicable to Him, because anything we say about God can only be valid as a metaphor or simile. Indeed, one strongly suspects that on some occasions when al-Shahrastānī uses the phrase "Necessary Existent by virtue of itself" approvingly—which he does nevertheless—he means the first created being, the universal intellect, and not God Himself. If God is the "Being Necessary Existent by virtue of itself," that is so only in an equivocal way of understanding "being" and "necessary" that has nothing in common with the way these phrases apply to the created world. God is not an existent and not necessary in a way that these words would help us comprehend the way He *is*. Ibn Sīnā has no understanding of how necessity or unity (*waḥda*) applies to God, or how God has knowledge of His creations.

These points of criticism affect aspects of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics, but they leave others intact. In general, al-Shahrastānī rejects Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics wherever it touches on the Divine, or comes close to that in the upper hemispheres of the heavens. Despite some critical remarks at the very end of the book, the workings of the celestial spheres and souls, the division of essence and existence, and the mechanics of secondary causes are largely accepted, at least when they apply to the lower heavens and the sublunar sphere. Also not affected are Ibn Sīnā's teachings in the natural sciences and the considerably large complex of teachings in philosophical psychology. Al-Shahrastānī accepts that souls continue to exist after the death of the human's body, and he also accepts—in general at least—Ibn Sīnā's explanation of prophecy and divine inspiration. He quibbles about the order of the celestial intellects relative to one another, and in line with Ismāʿīlī thinking suggests that the first, universal intellect—which he also calls the Active Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*)—does all the creative work in this world. In this passage on psychology he mentions a human intellect that is "supported by the holy faculty" and one of those "intellects that is distinguished from others by the faculty of intuition (*ḥads, Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 132, Engl. 98). The unbroken chain of these intellects culminate in those who are sent to the Prophet Muḥammad to witness his prophecy and call to it, and there can be hardly any doubt that these are the Ismāʿīlī imams. Together with the passage on the "universal soul" at the end of the first chapter, this passage is the clearest giveaway of Ismāʿīlī tendencies.

There are certain Ashʿarite elements in al-Shahrastānī's critique, most evident in the fifth chapter on the world's temporal creation and the smaller points that follow after that. There is also a critique of Ibn Sīnā's ontological realism that reminds one of similar points made by al-Ghazālī (Griffel 2009, 176–77). The universals do not exist in reality but are mere judgments of the human mind:

> So in existence there is no "animal" which is a genus, and "rational" which is a differentia, instead they are two considerations in the mind, not in the external world. (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 36, Engl. 39)

Ashʿarite influence also becomes evident in the third chapter on God's *tawḥīd*. Among the many arguments in the middle section, which assembles objections to Ibn Sīnā, is one that says there can be no intermediaries between God and created objects since those intermediaries would lack the power to bring about new existences. "Thus it is necessary for all contingents to be related to Him in the same way, without the mediation of an intellect, a soul, and a nature" (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 54, Engl. 51). The pronoun "Him" relates to "God, the Being Necessary by virtue of itself," and this argument is a well-known early—that is pre-Ghazalian—Ashʿarite objection against Ibn Sīnā's cosmology of secondary causes. It is nourished in the occasionalist view that only God has the power to create, and that He does so directly, without intermediaries or the involvement of secondary causes.

There is indeed a way to explain al-Shahrastānī's main critique against Ibn Sīnā out of Ashʿarite motivations. Like al-Shahrastānī, Ashʿarites stress God's transcendence against any attempts to explain God in terms that are similar to His creation. Ashʿarism grew out of the objection against Muʿtazilism, which assumes God's justice is like human justice. When al-Shahrastānī writes that God is not unity as we know unity, or does not have knowledge as we have knowledge, or does not have life as we have life, nor is He good the way we are good (*Muṣāraʿa*, Arab. 42, Engl. 43), then he certainly finds the Ashʿarites on his side. In fact, even al-Ghazālī may have picked up some of the Ismāʿīlī radical attitude to God's transcendence and appropriated it for his purposes (Griffel 2009, 260, 263). Ismāʿīlism, however, and with it al-Shahrastānī's critique of Ibn Sīnā, is an expression of a negative theology that refrains from making any positive statement of what God *is* apart from talking in metaphors and similes. Ashʿarism, on the other hand, despite its *bi-lā kayf* attitude, rejects negative theology (Griffel 2009, 263–64). For an Ashʿarite, it would be unacceptable to say that God is "neither existence nor nonexistence" or not part of the prime divisions of existence. For Ashʿarites, God's transcendence does not prevent Him from being closely and intimately connected with this world. For that, He needs to be at least an existent or a "thing" (*shayʾ*).

Al-Shahrastānī's *Wrestling Match* is a thoroughly Ismāʿīlī work that may have had little or no influence among Ashʿarites. It clearly advances Ismāʿīlī theology and philosophy. Earlier Ismāʿīlis found it difficult to avoid ambiguity on whether God is existent or not. Al-Kirmānī, for instance, taught that God's transcendence prevents Him from having something in common with us, but he certainly did not teach atheism and maintained that God's existence cannot be denied (Walker 1999, 86). Al-Shahrastānī's teaching of the "equivocacy of existence" (*ishtirāk al-wujūd*)—prompted by discussions in Ibn Sīnā's work—achieves a significant clarification. The *Wrestling Match* found at least two attentive readers in al-Shahrastānī's contemporary ʿUmar b. Sahlān al-Sāwī (d. c. 540/1145) and in Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) about a hundred years later. Both wrote a refutation of al-Shahrastānī's refutation, the first giving it the title *Wrestling Match with the Wrestling Match* (*Muṣāraʿat al-muṣāraʿa*) and the second, in a similar Arabic pun, *The Downfalls of the Wrestler* (*Maṣāriʿ al-muṣāriʿ*). Al-Sāwī's rejection still lies in manuscripts and awaits a close study. Al-Ṭūsī went through a period of Ismāʿīlism in his life and addresses al-Shahrastānī as someone familiar with Ismāʿīlī thinking who, however, admires Ibn Sīnā and defends his original philosophy against what he regards as feeble objections (Madelung 1976, 258–59).

Overall, al-Shahrastānī's line of criticism, despite the fact that it comes at a crucial time and was through his letters and numerous personal contacts distributed among the philosophical elite of the early sixth/twelfth century, had little influence. Al-Ghazālī opened Ashʿarism to monist tendencies (Griffel 2009, 254–55) that stress that God's way of existing is the same as ours—a position opposite to al-Shahrastānī's equivocacy of existence. Consequently, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the main Ashʿarite critic of the *falāsifa* in the decades after al-Shahrastānī, took the opposite direction from him in objecting to Ibn Sīnā's ontology. The latter taught that "existence" is a modulated term that applies in similar way but unequally to God and His creations. Whereas al-Shahrastānī objected that "existence" is rather an equivocal term and applies very differently to those two, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī chose the third remaining option and argued that "existence" is a univocal terms and applies to God and to His creation in like manner (Mayer 2003). His choice was motivated by the Ashʿarite position that God does not act out of the necessity of his existence. Existence, therefore, must be additional to His essence, as it is in His creation. The Arabic philosophical debate about how "existence" applies as a predicate lasted at least until the eleventh/seventeenth century and has a high point in Mullā Ṣadrā (d. ca. 1045/1635). Al-Shahrastānī's position on the "equivocacy of existence" and his arguments may have been one of the earliest manifestations of that debate; they will play, however, only a very minor role therein.

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CHAPTER 11

IBN ṬUFAYL'S (D. 1185) *ḤAYY IBN YAQẒAN*

TANELI KUKKONEN

Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān (*Living, Son of Wakeful*) is the only extant philosophical treatise from Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185), a courtier, philosopher, physician, and Sufi from Guadix, al-Andalus. The narrative weaves a detailed and compelling story of how a lonely boy, the eponymous Ḥayy, grows up on an equatorial island, with only the island's animals to keep him company, and how he gradually develops a working understanding of the principles that govern physical processes and the overall structure of the universe. From here, Ḥayy moves to consider the way the natural world issues from a transcendent principle and how it remains forever dependent on it. Ḥayy's spiritual progression culminates in a vision of ecstatic bliss that outlines the contours of supernal reality and the spiritual aspirant's own place within it. There then follows an anticlimactic denouement, in which Ḥayy comes in contact with human society and, after initial hopes of mutual recognition, despairs of the ignorance and obstinacy of those less enlightened than himself. The perfect philosopher ends up as he had started, alone on his island except for a single human companion (Asāl or Absāl), who is more devotee than friend.

Thanks to Ibn Ṭufayl's attractive style of writing and the ease with which *Ḥayy*'s principal lessons can be absorbed, the book has captured the imaginations of generations of readers both within the Muslim world and without. First translated into English in 1671 (Hebrew and Latin versions date back to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance), Ibn Ṭufayl's little book remains one of the most translated works in all of Arabic philosophy and an abidingly popular teaching tool. Yet the book's very accessibility, coupled with its comparative eschewing of argument and disputation, has led to its philosophical content sometimes being overlooked.[1] Relatively few scholars have attended to the details of what *Ḥayy* has to say, using it instead as an elementary overview of late classical *falsafa*, or else arguing over what Ibn Ṭufayl's overall authorial intentions may have been. Important as the latter question is, and useful though the book may be in the former regard, a closer reading of *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* stands to reveal an individual thinker with particular preoccupations, working in a specific historical context and with a particular set of conceptual tools (Kukkonen 2014). The following overview takes its start from Ibn Ṭufayl's social and intellectual environment and proceeds from there to canvas some of the peculiar features of the text and the philosophical worldview it portrays.

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[1] Another trend has been the projection of anachronistic concerns and notions: for a recent example see Attar 2007. The introduction and notes to Goodman's excellent English translation (1972) suffer from this, too, to an extent.

11.1. Ibn Ṭufayl and Almohad Islam

Ibn Ṭufayl grew up in the waning years of the Almoravid regime in the western reaches of the Islamicate world. We first learn about his emergence into public life in the company of other learned professionals in the initial decades of Almohad rule. The historical situation is one of considerable importance, inasmuch as the early Almohads were keen to promote a range of disciplines and intellectual approaches, thereby loosening the hold that the traditional religious sciences had enjoyed in the Maghreb. Coming out of an Almoravid background, Ibn Ṭufayl may actually have been helped in his career by his resolutely secular scholarly profile: physician, philosopher, debater, and musicologist, he will have exemplified the well-rounded breed of courtier the Almohads wished to cultivate in their initial outburst of cultural activity (Gauthier 1909; Conrad 1995).

The second Almohad caliph in particular, Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (r. 558/1163–580/1184), who became Ibn Ṭufayl's chief client as well as sponsor and close personal friend, built a reputation as a true lover of philosophy. Stories emanating from the caliph's court have Ibn Ṭufayl spending long nights in conversation with the caliph and of the philosopher acting as counselor to Abū Yaʿqūb in determining how best to foster learning in the newly established regime—picking projects as well as protégés, or steering the discussion this way and that. We know that Ibn Rushd (Latin Averroes, 520/1126–595/1198) was a beneficiary of Ibn Ṭufayl's actions, first through being brought to the attention of the Prince of Believers as a scholar of promise, then by being assigned to explicate Aristotle's doctrine. Ibn Ṭufayl even recommended Ibn Rushd to succeed him as personal physician to the caliphs in 578/1182 when he himself retired from public life (al-Marrakūshī *al-Muʿjib*, 172–75).

It is telling in a way that Ibn Ṭufayl did not choose for himself the task of commenting on Aristotle. The records speak consistently of Ibn Ṭufayl's interests being elsewhere later in his life—if we are to believe the reports, principally in the exploration of more spiritually pregnant questions than what the standard representation of Aristotelianism would afford. Ibn Ṭufayl's willingness nonetheless to facilitate the detailed study of Aristotle speaks to his broad conception of what was needed for the further flourishing of intellectual life in the Muslim West, as does his keen eye for talent in soliciting the services of Ibn Rushd. Otherwise, too, the picture of Ibn Ṭufayl that emerges is one of a gray eminence who would initiate directions in scholarship and research without feeling compelled to follow up on them in person. Ibn Ṭufayl proved instrumental, for instance, in instigating the so-called Andalusi revolt against Ptolemaic astronomy (Sabra 1984). While in Ibn Rushd's treatises this took the form of a reactionary Aristotelianism, recent scholarship has drawn attention to the more Neoplatonic precepts at work in al-Biṭrūjī's (d. ca. 601/1204) *On the Principles of Astronomy*, which fits with Ibn Ṭufayl's professed influence (see al-Biṭrūjī, *Principles*, introduction, §18 and Samsó 1994). Other examples of Ibn Ṭufayl's known authorship include a mnemonic medical poem, which has survived, and treatises on the soul and natural philosophy, which have not. We also have a rousing military poem composed for the caliph's campaign against the Christians to the north.

Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān itself can be viewed as a piece of occasional writing. The Almohad movement's founder, the preacher Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130), had taught that a minimal set of the central tenets of faith should be explicable in clear and rational terms and that this should come coupled with a code of practice informed solely by the twin sources of the Qurʾān and the prophetic traditions, without excessive reliance on authority (*taqlīd*) or pointless bookishness (Fletcher 1991). Some readers have accordingly seen in *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* an extension of the Almohad program—possibly also a sly justification of independent philosophical exploration as an alternative means of reaching the same end result. Ḥayy, after all, arrives at an appropriately reverential attitude toward the world's Creator and a perfected ethical practice without recourse to revelation. Small wonder, then, that early modern European interpreters, fascinated with the promise of natural theology, were drawn to *Ḥayy* (in its immediate context, *Ḥayy* reads equally as much as an encomium of a Ghazalian, theosophically oriented Sufism).

There is much to recommend an overall reading that aligns *Ḥayy* with the Almohad intellectual climate, although this should not be allowed to obscure from sight the more technical issues addressed within the text. It should also be said that even if Ibn Ṭufayl's concern ultimately was with the relationship of philosophy and religion, one would still need to get clear on what the conception of philosophy was from which Ibn Ṭufayl was working, and what the concept of religion. These questions bookend the following investigation: the middle part is taken up by a consideration of the main contents of Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophy.

11.2. SOURCES AND CONCEPTION OF PHILOSOPHY

Looming over Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophical work is the figure of Avicenna. *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* takes its title from an allegorical tale by Avicenna of the same name, and in the *Story of Salamān and Absāl* Ibn Ṭufayl finds the names for his remaining two protagonists. *Ḥayy* shares the two Avicennan allegories' concerns only in the most general sense—Avicenna deals with noetics, with a voyage of the soul, and with a disenchanting encounter with society—but *Ḥayy* lifts passages outright from the final section of Avicenna's *Pointers and Reminders* and from his preface to *The Healing*. Most notoriously, Ibn Ṭufayl in his author's preface and postscript intimates that *Ḥayy* is meant to lift the veil on the secrets of Avicenna's so-called Oriental philosophy (*asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqiyya*).

With these metatextual moves, Ibn Ṭufayl positions himself as initiate and gatekeeper to the most talked-about body of knowledge of the age, one that had taken the Islamic heartlands by storm in the late fifth/eleventh century but that had yet to make a sizable impact in the Islamic West: the singularly powerful philosophical synthesis of Avicenna. Through claiming that Avicenna's lost "Oriental philosophy" would have contained esoteric doctrines purposefully kept out of the available Peripatetic treatises, Ibn Ṭufayl audaciously intimates that if one reads *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* in the correct way, which is to say esoterically, one may gain new insight into the entire forgone philosophical tradition. The suggestion has captivated readers ranging from the Straussians to the Perennialists; Ibn Ṭufayl's presentation of Avicenna even made its way into thirteenth-century Castilian Jewish learning (Szpiech 2010).

Ibn Ṭufayl's claims about Avicenna's Oriental philosophy, however, add up to nothing more than an optical illusion. They are carefully crafted so as to impress the casual reader but on closer inspection vanish into thin air (Gutas 1994; Kukkonen 2009). Contrary to Ibn Ṭufayl's misrepresentation of Avicenna's preface to *The Healing* (Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 14–15), there is no reason to think that *The Wisdom of the Easterners* would have differed from Avicenna's extant works in doctrinal terms; rather, the difference is one of presentation and genre (Gutas 2000). For his part, Ibn Ṭufayl shows no signs of possessing anything beyond what we have when it comes to *The Easterners*. Overall—and this is rarely appreciated—Ibn Ṭufayl's actual engagement with Avicenna's philosophy appears not to have been particularly deep. The main body of teachings contained in *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* represents a middle-of-the-road blending of materials found in Arabic Aristotelianism as well as in adjacent intellectual traditions such as the Arabic continuation of Galenic medicine. If there is any specific insight into Avicenna on display in *Ḥayy*, it comes from al-Ghazālī: not the al-Ghazālī famous for his critique of the philosophers, however, but the crypto-Avicennan spiritual author of the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, the treatise on *God's Beautiful Names*, and the *Niche of Lights*. Ibn Ṭufayl himself admits as much in the preface to *Ḥayy* (18), and the evidence fits with what we know otherwise about the prominence of al-Ghazālī in early Almohad intellectual life.

As tends to be the case in such matters, the survey of previous philosophers with which Ibn Ṭufayl prefaces *Ḥayy* is intended to convey authority and mastery over his materials. By setting *Ḥayy* against the pretend philosophers of the day (*mutafalsifa*: 155.8 and cf. 18.8–9), with their corrupting influence on common folk, Ibn Ṭufayl presents himself as the avatar of a truer and purer philosophical tradition. Ibn Ṭufayl says that until very recently, the study of philosophy in al-Andalus had centered solely around logic and mathematics; he furthermore critiques his proximate predecessor, Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139), for an overly intellectualist understanding of the felicity that philosophy promises to its practitioner (*Ḥayy*, 10–12; see Altmann 1969). The criticism, however, masks a more basic agreement, which we would do well to note. Ibn Ṭufayl, like all major Arabic philosophers of the classical period, considered philosophy, or the love of wisdom, to constitute a certain way of life whose ultimate aim and highest expression was an existence devoted to the unadulterated contemplation of the highest truths. Such a life satisfies the demands of human nature and human dignity, predicated as it is on the use of our distinctive capacity of reason, and so it is most conducive to true happiness (*saʿāda*: 107.8–9).

Ḥayy's master narrative provides one of the finest illustrations of these principles to be found anywhere. The very way the story is constructed underlines, for instance, how a mastery of the productive arts (*technē*/*ṣināʿa*) forms a precondition to the development of detached and disinterested contemplation; at the same time, it is not to be confused with it (cp. *Ḥayy*, 36–38 and 52–55 with Aristotle, *Met.* I.1–2). At the same time, both (1) the route that Ḥayy takes to his perfected state of contemplation and (2) Ibn Ṭufayl's description of that state and its object serve to highlight what is distinctive about the conception of philosophy and wisdom operative in *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*.

Ibn Ṭufayl, along with the majority of the Muslim philosophers, considers it an indispensable part of human wisdom that it should build on an understanding of all of reality, along with its hierarchical ordering. This is said in part against those who would presume to taste straightaway the fruit of philosophical wisdom without first making an effort to examine its root and stem. Ibn Ṭufayl accepts that many of the loftier claims made by the philosophers will sound preposterous or even blasphemous to the uninitiated: only when one understands and accepts the underlying precepts to the philosophers' ontological scheme will what they say make sense. These in turn constitute a hard-won treasure built on an extensive investigation of our surrounding reality and of ourselves. Ibn Ṭufayl in the prologue to *Ḥayy* underlines that his narrative is deliberately crafted so that every step of the way, the reader may verify personally the results he produces, instead of accepting the author's claims out of some misplaced sense of loyalty or on authority (*taqlīdī*: *Ḥayy*, 18.14).

The notion of personal verification, of course, presupposes that one is able to recognize the truth when one sees it, either immediately and intuitively or through some truth-conserving mechanism of reasoning. It is here that a second curious feature of *Ḥayy* presents itself, namely the disregard—bordering on disdain—shown for logic (Germann 2008). Ḥayy's story otherwise finds a place for all the major parts of the Peripatetic curriculum, and in roughly the expected sequence: natural philosophy, first in general and then in its specifics (cosmology, psychology); then metaphysics; lastly ethics and politics, deriving from an understanding of the great chain of being and humanity's place within it. Logic, however, is altogether absent from the picture. Several passages describe Ḥayy's reasoning processes in generic inferential terms, yet Ibn Ṭufayl makes no effort to present Ḥayy as classifying either premises or consequences in any sustained fashion. This stands in stark contrast to illustrious predecessors such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Bājja (*Ḥayy*, 13.11, 13.1) and also in comparison to how Ibn Rushd, Ibn Ṭufayl's own junior colleague, obsessed over hammering Aristotle's arguments into syllogistic shape.

The reason for this seems to be that Ibn Ṭufayl genuinely did not find logic all that useful or interesting—not for his particular project, at any rate. In discussing the efforts of the earliest Andalusi philosophers, Ibn Ṭufayl cites a rhyming stanza to the effect that as sciences go, both logic and mathematics are devoid of meaning, so that their mastery yields no benefit (*bāṭil taḥṣīluhu lā yufīdu: Ḥayy*, 12.9). For good measure, Ibn Ṭufayl states that these sciences could not bring any of the earlier Andalusi thinkers any closer to real perfection (*ḥaqīqat al-kamāl*: 12.7). The picture that emerges is one of logic being at best a tool for philosophy, not its proper part (13.11), and as such utterly devoid of content. Studying logic does not teach a single fact about the world, something for which we require close and sustained observation of our surroundings.

This much of course is trivially true: we need to acquire our premises from somewhere. And although some have portrayed Ibn Ṭufayl as rejecting the traditional, syllogistic mode of philosophical investigation in favor of an empiricist or experimental methodology in the early modern sense of the word, that claim is too strong and not borne out by the evidence. (For one thing, it would be a stretch to claim that Ḥayy would be doing much sustained experimentation; for another, the worldview at which he arrives is a resolutely old-fashioned one, essentially an Aristotelian sensible universe with a Neoplatonic superstructure and elements of Galenic physiology.) What does seem plausible is that through Ḥayy's example, Ibn Ṭufayl wanted to emphasize one part of the Almohad intellectual legacy, that is, the notion that each human being is inherently and innately capable of accessing reality in a primary and primitive, yet correct and essentially rational fashion. (See Urvoy 1996.)

There is another reason for the displacement of logic from the core of Ibn Ṭufayl's conception of philosophy. Whether by accident or by design, Ibn Ṭufayl ends up de-emphasizing what is central to Avicenna's portrayal of the ultimate philosophical felicity, namely, that it is predicated on the philosopher's ability to perceive reality in terms of its invariant structuring features—to acquire demonstrative knowledge of things in terms of their essences and causes. Ḥayy's investigation into the principles of being, rather, leads him to a single-minded contemplation of the supreme being: and in this task, logic plays no positive role, since the Necessary Existent (*mawjūd wājib al-wujūd*) transcends the Aristotelian categories and even the standard criteria for distinguishing unity from diversity (*Ḥayy*, 122–26). Though this description of the Necessary Existent is standard Avicennan fare, and though Ibn Ṭufayl can plead Avicenna's support when it comes to the nondiscursive and noninferential nature of the knowledge of the highest principles (7.7–9), his conception of the nature of the perfection of the human essence (*kamāl dhātihi: Ḥayy*, 96.13) resembles al-Ghazālī—for that matter, the Kindian tradition—more than it does Avicenna (see Kukkonen 2009). One of the practical outcomes is that logic, which is the Avicennan philosopher's principal tool for sorting out relations between worldly things, gets sidelined when one moves to consider the higher reality—which in the end is the only one that matters.[2]

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[2] To gauge Ibn Ṭufayl's distance from Avicenna on this point consider how for Ḥayy, "sensible things in their totality are veils (*ḥujub*) blocking one from witnessing (*mushāhada*)" the more exalted

Ibn Ṭufayl's exemption of logic from the practice of philosophy bypasses much of the footwork done by actual historical philosophers—conceptual analysis, dialectical debate, the organization of knowledge into demonstrative syllogisms, the rooting out of fallacies. Above all, it obscures from view the way that the project of philosophy in the Islamic world constituted an ongoing conversation. The impression the text leaves, surely deliberately, is that what Ḥayy discovers, and what *Ḥayy* sketches out for the reader, is the set of propositions that any reputable philosopher will reach regarding the world, the soul, and God, provided only that the task is approached with a clear head and minimal preconceptions. In some cases, this means papering over differences that an informed reader would know do not admit of easy reconciliation (for the example of Galenic vs. Aristotelian physiology see Richter-Bernburg 1996). The handful of philosophical issues Ibn Ṭufayl allows to remain in dispute—spontaneous generation, the eternity of the world, individual immortality—constitute such well-known controversies in twelfth-century intellectual life as to make any false front of enforced harmony unsellable. But in each of these cases, too, a specific strategy is deployed that allows Ibn Ṭufayl to present philosophical wisdom as a coherent and mostly uniform tradition, as we shall see.

11.3. Physics and Metaphysics

Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān, then, due to its overarching narrative, tends to obscure the discursive and argumentative aspect of philosophy. On the positive side, the treatise, through letting the reader join in on the progress made by the protagonist, confers effectively some of the joy to be had in discovery and knowledge acquisition. Through looking at the world through Ḥayy's eyes and ears, we receive a plethora of vivid descriptions of particular worldly phenomena, particularly as regards animal life: deer locking horns (35), ravens burying their mates (46), microorganisms in the bellies of beasts (80), and intentional animal sounds of caution, mating, and defense (34). Many of these descriptions are culled from existing Arabic literature and folklore, religious as well as secular; but Ibn Ṭufayl clearly delights in adding little flourishes to his story, as when the doe who raises the infant Ḥayy not only allows him to suckle at her teat, but also weans the boy by guiding him to fruit trees and cracking open the harder fruits' shells for the boy to get at the flesh (33–34).

Sometimes self-interest and disinterested observation coincide, as for instance when Ḥayy takes inspiration from birds' nesting habits and begins to build a storehouse for his own possessions (53). Ḥayy's earlier lament about lacking the natural weapons, defenses, and means of modesty that other animals have (35–37) is offset by his recognizing that

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things: *Ḥayy*, 108.2–3, and cf. 99.10–11. More on a linguistic level, because everyday terms and concepts do not apply at all to supernal reality, one will inevitably end up entangled in paradox and falsify the experience when speaking about it (see sec. 11.4 below).

his hands are uniquely versatile, a tool for any- and everything, and that they can therefore make up for any perceived lack through intentional craftsmanship (54; cf. Galen, *De usu partium*, 1:2–6). With his own two hands Ḥayy first covers himself with leaves, then learns how to weave threads and make clothing from hemp; Ḥayy also uses his hands to assume gradual control of his environment, for instance by making weapons (53–54) and taming wild horses and asses as well as crafting bridles and saddles to assist in riding them (54–55; Ḥayy also keeps poultry for laying eggs). In another case of instrumental and incipient theoretical interests coinciding, a chance encounter with a brushfire leads Ḥayy first to nourish and protect the flame, then to realize that grilled fish is quite delicious, which in turns leads to his becoming a proficient hunter and fisherman. But along the way, Ḥayy also postulates a kinship between fire—the thing he loves the best, which he furthermore likens to the sun—and the stuff out of which the stars are made (47–49).

Ḥayy is led to ponder deeper questions through two early encounters with death, first the expiration of his adoptive mother (38–45) and then the slaughter of the animals Ḥayy uses for sustenance (49–52). While the first encounter is initially traumatic and described in emotive terms, it soon turns into a disinterested curiosity concerning what had animated the doe's body (Kukkonen 2008, 190–91, 193–94). From a closely detailed excavation of the doe's breast, Ḥayy draws two important conclusions: (*a*) the heart is the center from which animal functions originate (42–44) and (*b*) what was responsible for the doe's functions was some principle that had once inhabited the heart and coursed through the animal's veins but which vacated the body upon death (44–45, cf. 52.10–14). Ḥayy observes that each of the deer in whose company he spends his days shares in a common form and shape (*ṣūra wa-shakl*) and infers from this that each is vivified by the same principle the doe was (46): later, in vivisecting a captive animal, this proximate animating principle is identified as vital heat (49–50) and spirit (*rūḥ*: 51–52).

In a process that mimics the accumulation of medical experience (*tajriba*), Ḥayy through repeated dissection and vivisection is allowed to become as acute in reflection (*naẓar*) and cognizance (*fikra*) regarding these matters as the greatest naturalists (*ṭabīʿiyyūn*), by whom Ibn Ṭufayl means the medical profession (50.13–51.2, and see 32.10–11; cf. al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh*, 23). Ḥayy, for instance, discovers the nervous system and links it with the brain (52.5–9), although how this squares with Ḥayy's anti-Galenic cardiocentrism is left unclear. (See further *Ḥayy*, 29.12–32.8 and Kukkonen 2011, 199–200.) The knowledge reached by such methods is propaedeutic and practical, as befits the limited epistemic ambition of medical science on the philosophers' view.[3] Mostly it amounts to an understanding of how the nerves, the compartments of the brain, and the organs and limbs each serve the vital spirit and therefore the life of the organism as a whole.

From such concrete examples, the curtain is gradually drawn back to disclose the interlocking constituent parts of the Aristotelian physical universe, from the four elements, through the notion of nature as substantial form (65.7), to the celestial mechanics that steer and stir the more complex forms into being from the more elemental. Ibn Ṭufayl lets Ḥayy trace what looks like a reverse-engineered Neoplatonic argument from multiplicity to unity (55–61): however, instead of having the argument culminate in some transcendent principle, Ḥayy at this stage merely considers what unites all bodies qua bodies (60–61). Ḥayy's exploits thus initially guide him to the principles of sensible substance.

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[3] See Richter-Bernburg 1996; Forcada (2011) provides an illuminating point of comparison in Ibn Bājja; Ibn Ṭufayl's sponsor, the caliph Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf, is supposed to have begun his theoretical studies with medicine, on which see al-Marrākushī, *Muʿjib*, 170–71.

Ḥayy points to three-dimensional extension as the first defining feature of corporeality (70–72), suggesting that Ibn Ṭufayl took Avicenna's side against his protégé Averroes on this disputed issue (see Hyman 1965). Ibn Ṭufayl has Ḥayy's imagination recoil from the abstract notion of body as such, while letting on that this may be a problem with imaginative representation rather than with the concept itself (72). One of the more involved pieces of reasoning in *Ḥayy*, for which Ibn Ṭufayl duly congratulates his protagonist, thereafter establishes the finite size of the physical universe and its spherical shape (76–79). We are assured that Ḥayy accomplished much more in the realm of astronomical speculation (79–80); what suffices for now is that the whole universe can be viewed as a single animal (80–81) at least insofar as one wishes to treat in abstract the finite collection of bodies qua bodies.[4] The reason the finitude of the universe matters is that it can be used to argue for the dependence of the universe on a transcendent cause even if the universe is pre-eternal: if a finite body can only contain finite power, and if the totality of bodies can only reach a finite size, then the infinite power needed to sustain the universe in infinite motion must derive from outside the system of physical bodies (83–85). This proof for a transcendent active principle for eternal motion is a variation on the argument in Aristotle's *Physics* (VIII.6–10); the precise way in which it is formulated tells us one important thing. On *Ḥayy*'s terms, the shift from physics to metaphysics looks like a move from naturalism to theology, not so much a consideration of being as such. Although Ibn Ṭufayl is happy later to extol how everything ceaselessly and essentially depends on the First Cause (88, 133), it is a physical proof that establishes God's existence in the first place.

This is a curiously old-fashioned approach for a professed Avicennan to take, one more in keeping with the earlier Peripatetic tradition. The impression is reinforced by *Ḥayy*'s other proof, which, in the vein of John Philoponus, al-Kindī, and numerous *kalām* theologians including al-Ghazālī, proceeds from a basic finitism regarding the world's spatial dimensions to its temporal beginnings (82–83). Here, too, one advances to an understanding of divinity first by understanding what rules guide the physical reality of bodies, then denying all this of God. In a sense this traces the standard moves made in *kalām* theology: *Ḥayy* merely replaces *kalām* physics and metaphysics with an Aristotelian framework, which Ibn Ṭufayl will have considered vastly superior. Ibn Ṭufayl here shows himself to be out of step with what was happening in the Islamic heartlands by the time of *Ḥayy*'s writing: in the East, Avicenna's metaphysical proofs for God's existence ended up dominating not only Islamic philosophy, but also Muslim theology.

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[4] For all that Ibn Ṭufayl describes vividly how the different parts of the universe correspond to the different body parts, this is all nonetheless presented strictly as a metaphor.

Returning to the natural world, central to Ḥayy's progress is his classification of living beings according to the activities peculiar to each. Their many specific differences notwithstanding, sensation and motion are common to all animals (58.1–2), nutrition and growth to all plants (59.5). The simpler bodies likewise are shown to share in a common nature due to their exchanges, with the hot becoming cold and the cold hot and with the elements changing into one another (59.12–60.1). Framing entities in terms of their powers and capacities (pl. *quwan*) is common to Andalusi metaphysics, as Ibn Bājja and Averroes both do something similar (Kukkonen, forthcoming). Ibn Ṭufayl additionally draws attention to the nested character of these designations: everything that is an animal automatically possesses the capacities characteristic of plants, just as all plants share all the characteristics of bodies in general.

Ḥayy's subsequent discovery of matter and form as structuring principles of the world is described in terms of a dawning of the spiritual world (64.8). This may seem odd at first, given that what follows is largely a standard account of Aristotelian hylomorphism. Ibn Ṭufayl's choice of vocabulary, however, reflects how in his mind, a presentation of physics will inevitably lead to the recognition that an extracosmic force is needed to account for the generation of any substantial form. This is God, who as the ultimate efficient cause (*fāʿil*) and the principle responsible for the coming-to-be of all forms is the Creator (*al-khāliq*) and sustainer of the world (86.4–88.2). In a characteristic flourish, it is the activities and powers that at first seem to belong to animals and plants essentially, and which Ḥayy ascribes to himself as well, that are shown to emanate from elsewhere, that is, from a transcendent principle (61.1–6, 73.9–74.9); these various forms of perfection are the primary divine bounty (88–89).

The notion of a divine power that suffuses the universe appears in the pseudo-Aristotelian, Stoicizing *De mundo* tradition that enters the Arabic milieu through Alexander of Aphrodisias's *On the Principles of the All*. Its presence in *Ḥayy*, though, looks more like a Ghazalian radicalization of Avicennan emanationism. In Avicenna, substantial change and the generation of substantial form prompt an appeal to transcendent principles. Not unreasonably, Ibn Ṭufayl now posits (through Ḥayy) that if being is as being does, as the Andalusi Aristotelians believed to be the case, then one may trace back to a transcendent agent all the manifestations of a being's essential active powers. (Passive potentialities are another matter, as we shall see.) Significantly, it is when Ḥayy stands at the cusp of what is basically a Neoplatonist emanationist scheme that Ibn Ṭufayl chooses to evoke both Qurʾānic testimony and *kalām* formulations: God is the ultimate author of all our actions (Q. 8:17), since for every originated thing there must be an originator (*kull ḥādith fa-lā budd lahu min muḥdith, Ḥayy*, 73.9). The choice in vocabulary is meant to signify that philosophical reasoning will arrive at substantially the same conclusions Islam does.

In terms of a general ontology, Ḥayy, when examining the different animal species, hits upon the notion of individuation by matter (57; cf. 130.4–5). In keeping with the main trend in Andalusi philosophy, *Ḥayy* also upholds the theory of a plurality of substantial forms (*Ḥayy*, 100–101; for attestations of this theory in Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Bājja, Ibn Ṭufayl, and Averroes see di Giovanni 2011, 213–14, 220, 230–31). More complex entities build on simpler ones. For instance,

> All earthen bodies—soil, rock, minerals, plants, animals, and other bodies that are heavy—comprise a single group (*jumla wāḥida*) sharing in a single form from which there issues a falling motion (as long as there is no impediment to the descent) . . . plants and animals form a subset of this group, since their sharing in the previous group is supplemented by another form, from which issue nutrition and growth . . . these two activities are common to plants and animals; they must therefore issue from a form shared by the two, for which the expression "the vegetative soul" has been coined. A portion of this subset, the animals, while sharing with the latter the first and the second form, possesses a third, additional form, from which issue sense-perception as well as motion from place to place. (66.9–68.3)

The ultimate form constitutes the differentia for the proximate species: its advent, however, does not signal the extinction of the previous forms. Instead, one form is superimposed on another (68.3–7). The key to bridging the physical and the metaphysical, meanwhile, lies in the notion of suitability or fitness (*iʿtidād, istiʿdād*), a key concept Ibn Ṭufayl appropriates from Avicenna. (For fitness as passive potentiality in Avicenna see Kukkonen, forthcoming.) In an explanatory scheme exploited by Ibn Ṭufayl at various points in his narrative, starting with Ḥayy's spontaneous birth,[5] the various physical processes of stirring and mixing the elements result in the creation of blends more or less suited to the reception of various kinds of forms, which in turn can become the substrate for more complex ones (102–3). In what is by now a familiar twist in favor of a dynamic picture of form, Ḥayy concludes that the "real nature of the existence of every body lies solely in its form, which is to say its *fitness for determinate motions*" (85.6–7, my emphasis).

The resulting picture represents a concatenation of disparate ontological elements. The being of a natural substance is defined in terms of its form (Aristotle and Averroes), though its physical constitution amounts only to a certain fitness or passive potentiality for receiving the emanation of transcendent influences (Avicenna); it is the powers and operations of things that serve to define them (Ibn Bājja), while at the same time all these forces and motions issue from a divine source, without whom they would be nothing (*kalām* and Sufi speculation, or Avicenna's cosmological argument read through al-Ghazālī's eyes).

11.4. SOUL AND GOD

The research theme to which *Ḥayy* returns most often is that of soul—the explanation of life functions, especially those in which humans take part, and the question of whether something in human nature points beyond the present embodied life (Kukkonen 2011). Ibn Ṭufayl's treatment of philosophical psychology in *Ḥayy* is nevertheless quite selective. While we must piece together whatever understanding we can on the basis of what we possess, it is good to keep in mind that *Ḥayy*'s concerns do not necessarily reflect its author's full preoccupations. (On Ibn Ṭufayl's lost work on the soul see al-Marrākushī, *Muʿjib*, 172; also Conrad 1996a, 15 n. 61.)

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[5] Ḥayy's spontaneous birth is clearly the preferred option to the alternative account that echoes the story of Moses on the water (Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy,* 24–6; see Qurʾān 20:37–40 or Exodus 2:1–10).

First, some significant omissions: Ḥayy at no point investigates his own perceptual faculties, contrary to the precedent set by Aristotle and almost every major Arabic philosopher before Ibn Ṭufayl. This has important epistemological implications, in that *Ḥayy* nowhere addresses the issue of how, exactly, one moves from particular observations to universal judgments, despite the question naturally arising from the overall shape of the narrative. Nor do Avicenna's five inner senses receive any attention, apart from a few small asides relating to the limitations of the imaginary faculty (*quwwa khayāla*, 91.4–5) and an oblique early reference to memory and Avicennan estimation in the way Ḥayy notices how intuitive judgments of affinity and enmity linger long after the sense object ceases to be present (34–35). Ḥayy's observations concerning his own sensory apparatus only snap into focus the moment its utility comes to be questioned and its results get left behind (93–94). The senses and the imaginary faculty, which are geared toward the corporeal, cannot promise true knowledge regarding God, who as the eternal and uncaused necessary existent wholly transcends the physical (90–92, 105.5–6). The soul's motive faculties, including the appetitive and spirited parts, barely receive any mention at all: Ḥayy notes that insofar as he is an animal, he has "diverse parts, different powers, and various objectives" (107.3–4), but that is all.

Ḥayy really only concentrates on two themes in philosophical psychology: the role of the vital spirit (*rūḥ*) in administering the organic body, and the intellect as the real essence of the human being. These represent the far ends of psychic activity, so to speak, the lowest and the highest, leaving largely unattended the hylomorphic nature of the intervening Aristotelian faculties and their unity in constituting the organism and its life. As regards the spirit, *Ḥayy* harmonizes medical and Peripatetic pneumatology in idiosyncratic fashion (see Kukkonen 2011, 200–205). The soul vehicle, which is vital heat, is receptive to the transcendent spirit (65.9–10, 103.10) because of its finely balanced elemental mixture (*shadīd al-iʿtidāl*, 103.3–4). These two, not the living body as a whole, form the primary hylomorphic compound that is the principle of life. The body's members and organs are relegated to a wholly instrumental status, in what looks like an echo of Galen's *De usu partium* (see, e.g., *Ḥayy*, 51.5–13, 52.12, 60.13). The Platonic tendency to regard the body strictly as an instrument is yoked to the growing disdain Ḥayy shows for it (44–46, 65.12, 92.8–9, 106.8–9). The spirit, by contrast, which carries the emanation of life, is exalted by Ibn Ṭufayl in Qurʾānic terms as one of God's charges (*al-rūḥ huwa min umūr Allāh*: 28.2, 28.11–12).

The spirit, albeit that it is variably instantiated, is still fundamentally one, as Ḥayy observes:

> Reflecting on the genus of plants as a totality, he judged that it constitutes a unity by dint of what he had seen of the universality of the [plants'] acts of growth and nutrition. Ḥayy joined together next the genera of animals and plants in his soul, since he saw them both as growing and consuming nutrition—this notwithstanding the fact that animals possess something additional to plants by virtue of the excellence of sensation, perception, and motion. (Perhaps, though, something akin to the latter can be evidenced in plants: for instance, flowers turn their countenance toward the sun, while their roots move in the direction of sustenance, etc.) Through this deliberation, it became evident to him that plants and animals constitute a single thing on account of both sharing in one single thing. In one of them it is more complete and perfect (*atamm wa-akmal*), while in the other it is somehow impeded: it is as with water, which, though one, is divided in two, with one part flowing, while the other is frozen. (*Ḥayy*, 59.2–11)

Part of this is quite properly Aristotelian: it is the single living being that unites and subsumes all the functions and powers that it has. (This dilutes somewhat the force of the theory of a plurality of substantial forms, alluded to above.) However, rather than have the vegetative functions provide the baseline for the psychic faculties and the animal powers then come on top of that so as to make up a new, more complex type of being, the way Aristotelian faculty psychology was more commonly taught (for a contemporaneous account see, e.g., Ibn Rushd, *Mukhtaṣar*, 22 al-Aḥwānī), Ibn Ṭufayl says that the more functions a being exhibits, the stronger its claim to life is, and the clearer the manifestation of the one and only spirit that suffuses all that is alive (*Ḥayy*, 100–102). (The utterly simple heavens prove an exception to this rule; see *Ḥayy*, 100.5–7.) To put it in other words, an animal is not a plant with added capabilities; rather, the plant is an animal with certain functions throttled and thereby denied to it. This makes of the human being the paradigmatic living being: and indeed, according to Ibn Ṭufayl the very notion that humanity represents the original intent and goal of the divine creative purpose is what is hinted at by the prophetic tradition according to which God created Adam according to His form (*Ḥayy*, 29.6–7). It is really only the imperfection of certain elemental mixes that leads to lesser creatures being instantiated in the world in the first place, from animals to plants to inanimate objects. This is Avicennan as well as more generically Neoplatonic: as the *Canon of Medicine* puts it (I.1.7.2), the dispensation of divine gifts proceeds according to the recipient's capabilities, while the liberality of their author remains the same everywhere and at all times.[6] Ḥayy's spontaneous generation, then, merely represents one peculiar instantiation of a more general metaphysical mechanism, one not limited to living beings.

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[6] See Kukkonen (forthcoming) for further remarks on this principle. Ibn Rushd in his long *Commentary* on *De anima* (II, comm. 32) similarly holds that it is the rational animal that nature seeks to realize in all instances of life, although he does not supply an argument. Fazlur Rahman (1952, 110–1) has teased out what I describe as Ibn Ṭufayl's position from an abstruse passage in Avicenna's *Salvation* (*Najāt*, 189–91; see also *De Anima*, 5.6, 258–61).

As for the intellect, *Ḥayy* rehearses some traditional arguments in favor of its incorporeality and immortality (92–93). Ibn Ṭufayl posits that since the power of reason has no need of a bodily organ (105.6, 121.3–10), it is only called a faculty metaphorically (5.13); he also has Ḥayy arrive at the thesis of the identity of knower, known, and act of knowing (105.7–8). This, along with the recognition that any power that apprehends an immaterial being must itself be immaterial, prepares the grounds for Ḥayy's most controversial advance: the ecstatic state in which his sense of personal identity is extinguished (*fanāʾ*, 108.12) as Ḥayy enters into a rapturous contemplation of the divine.

The primacy of contemplation for human life is first established through a variation on Aristotle's *ergon* argument in which Ḥayy locates humanity within the great chain of being. As the sole sublunary animal capable of awareness of the Necessary Existent, contemplation of this superior being—not, note, the kind of reasoned examination of physical reality in which Ḥayy has engaged up until this point—constitutes his special task and proper calling (104.6–11). Cognitive access to transcendent objects in turn suggests an essential kinship with them, on the principle that like is known by like. In an intriguing though incomplete echo of Avicenna, it is through perfect awareness, which cashes out as perfectly transparent self-awareness, that Ḥayy most resembles the Necessary Existent, whose actions are entirely self-referential. God's entire mode of being consists in "thinking thinking thinking" (Aristotle, *Met.* XII.9): in a transference that is not quite symmetrical, Ḥayy's efforts to become godlike result in his consciousness, too, melting into a primal knowledge of the divine, to the point that Ḥayy loses all sense of self.

Before this experiential knowledge (*maʿrifa*), Ḥayy has already managed to gain some rational insight into the nature of the First Cause. The main results of Ḥayy's theological investigations are that God possesses every positive perfection and that He is free of every privation. The negative appears to trump the positive: as infinite, God lies even beyond perfection, goodness, and beauty (94.10–13). Following the precedent set by al-Ghazālī in the *Niche of Lights, Ḥayy* explains the apophatic approach to God (*tanzīh*) as a simple denial of corporeality and all corporeal associations (*Ḥayy*, 118.2). As for the positive divine attributes (*ṣifāt al-ithbāt*), Ibn Ṭufayl only names knowledge, power, and wisdom: Ḥayy exhibits no interest in exploring these attributes, claiming instead that they all can be brought back to an absolute unity and the real nature of God's essence (*ḥaqīqat dhātihi: Ḥayy*, 118.6). This perhaps explains the haphazard nature in which the attributes are evoked, even as it brings to light the Muʿtazilite flavor in early Almohad theology.

Ḥayy's characterization of apophasis as a simple passage from corporeal multiplicity to incorporeal unity serves multiple purposes. First, it establishes *Ḥayy*'s orthodox Almohad credentials, just as the book veers into controversial territory. Second, it allows Ibn Ṭufayl to maintain that any paradoxical and potentially offensive formulations that either he, Ḥayy, or the more notorious Sufis have arrived at regarding the *unio mystica* are unavoidable, issuing as they do from a fundamental mismatch between supernal cognition, which grasps its objects in a unitive act, and mundane language and concepts, both of which arise from an extraction of universal meanings from sensible particulars.[7] Finally, at a later stage, Ibn Ṭufayl can appeal to the inability of most people to rise above the corporeal to explain why Ḥayy (and perhaps any philosopher) necessarily fails when he tries to put his wondrous findings across to commoners.

Ḥayy's ecstasy is meant to echo the joy that Ibn Ṭufayl says he himself experienced when brought to consider the very notion of Avicenna's Oriental philosophy: it is here, therefore, that both Ḥayy's and the imagined reader's search culminates. What gets disclosed in *Ḥayy*'s top-down vision of divine light descending and refracting are the basics of Avicenna's tripartite emanationist scheme of celestial intelligences, souls, and bodies (*Ḥayy*, 127–29; see Avicenna, *Healing: Metaphysics* IX.1–5). At the bottom rung of the supernal hierarchy stands a being of seventy thousand faces, each of which has seventy thousand mouths, each of which has seventy thousand tongues, every one of them singing God's praises (*Ḥayy*, 129–30). This monstrosity stands for the Agent Intellect and its operations in conjunction with human material intellects. Only noetic functions are ascribed to the Agent Intellect, however, not metaphysical ones, so perhaps Ibn Ṭufayl, on the model of al-Ghazālī, wishes to emphasize direct divine agency in every act of generation (where Avicenna by contrast had allowed the Agent Intellect to mediate as the Giver of Forms—the latter term is conspicuously absent from *Ḥayy*).

It is as a member of a host of lesser celestial beings that Ḥayy now rediscovers himself (130.3–4)—as an intellectual substance, originally individuated through matter and attached to a body but now capable of separation (130.4–6 ff.). Thus concludes one of the more conspicuously Avicennan sequences in *Ḥayy*. One cannot help but wonder if this striking and surgically clean vision of an intelligible universe did not in fact form the major part of the "oriental wisdom" Ibn Ṭufayl claims he was so struck by. If it did, then one should note how all of its major components are readily accessible in the psychological and metaphysical parts of Avicenna's *Shifāʾ*, with the final section of the *Ishārāt* (as well as al-Ghazālī's *Beautiful Names* and the *Niche of Lights*) providing the means for its alignment with the Sufi notion of *maʿrifa*.

11.5. Ethics and Religion

Armed with a perfectionist ontology (being seeks the actuality proper to it) and a eudaimonistic ethics, *Ḥayy* arrives at the realization that a fully realized human being is one who devotes all of her or his energies to the detached and ceaseless contemplation of the first principles. This is not an entirely simple matter, however, in terms of either Ḥayy's own practice or its relation to those humans who show themselves to be incapable of such full actualization of their natures. In a key passage for *Ḥayy*'s ethics, the self-taught philosopher discovers a basic affinity within himself with all three major dimensions of reality—mundane, celestial, and transcendent—and determines that each must receive its proper due (106–7). This leads to the famous "three imitations," described in some detail as preliminary to Ḥayy's attainment of the divine vision and plainly presented as a training regime for it.

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[7] *Ḥayy*, 126.8–12, and see 130.10–11 for the scripturally undergirded notion that what "no eye can see and no ear can hear" cannot be described. Infamous sayings attributed to al-Ḥallāj and al-Bisṭamī are cited anonymously at *Ḥayy*, 4, likely following Ghazālian precedent. In support of the notion that one should not try to put into words one's experience of the divine, Ibn Ṭufayl additionally cites a verse from al-Ghazālī's *Deliverer from Error*: see *Ḥayy*, 4.15 and cf. al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh*, 40.

1. *Ḥayy* portrays the body's needs and its protection as an inconvenient necessity, to be handled with a minimum of fuss (113.5–7), although Ḥayy does devise a sophisticated dietary scheme based on the principle of the preservation of life. The lives of as few organisms as possible are to be cut short by one's actions, and the lives of more complex organisms count for more than the simple ones, so that ultimately Ḥayy as the perfect animal has the right to consume meat and eggs to the extent that this is necessary for his own self-preservation, but only to that extent. Otherwise, Ḥayy contents himself with fleshy fruit or, failing that, nutritious seeds and still-growing vegetables (110–12).
2. The imitation of the celestial bodies is a more complex task, since the heavens themselves exhibit three aspects: they are luminous and pure bodies, their circular motions make them into providential caretakers of the sensible universe, and their intellectual aspect (argued for earlier at 98–99) lends them an uninterrupted awareness of the Necessary Existent. Accordingly, Ḥayy sets out to maintain strict bodily cleanliness, to assist all plants and animals in reaching their full potential, to engage in walkabouts and dervish-like whirling around in a circle, and finally (with assistance from his swirling) to shut out the outside world in a singular act of contemplation (113–17).
3. The last-mentioned task shades into Ḥayy's third imitation, that by which the philosopher actualizes his kinship with the intelligible universe. This reduces to shunning the corporeal and perfecting one's knowledge of the Necessary Existent (117–18). I have argued elsewhere that the consequent shift in Ḥayy's attentions from a providential care for sublunary existents to a disinterested turn toward higher principles represents a shift from an efficient mode of causality to a stance whereby the superior entity functions as a final cause and an object of imitation (Kukkonen 2008, 197–200). Described yet another way, what happens here is that one of Avicenna's famous faces of the intellect—the one that faces downward and manages worldly affairs—is exchanged for another, the face that receives the intelligibles from above (*De Anima*, I.5, 47.8–18; *Najāt*, 163–65). The two correspond to the active and contemplative lives of Aristotle's ethics and its corresponding two types of intellect, the practical and the theoretical. There is no question but that the latter kind of life is inherently superior; as a consequence, even though Ḥayy's previous efforts in extending the divine bounty to all creatures are all portrayed in admiring terms, they are now to be cast aside.

Seen from a Sufi point of view, there are a few curious features to Ḥayy's evolving practice. One, of course, is that it happens without a master; another is how relatively painless it all seems. Ḥayy decides to cut his food intake to a bare minimum and to leave behind worldly cares and concerns, which accords with the way the Sufis were enjoined to trust to God for their sustenance. (On *tawakkul* in Ibn Ṭufayl's proximate sources see, e.g., al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XXXV, part 2; see further *Ḥayy*, 146–47, where a contrast is drawn with civilization's obsession with material security.) But nowhere is his previous custom of storing away goods criticized or presented as arising from a selfish material attachment. Ibn Ṭufayl has Ḥayy engaging in an effort to suppress his own bodily urges, and the chosen vocabulary at one point does reflect the Sufi understanding of spiritual struggle (*jihād*); yet all this amounts to is the attempt to shut out sensory information and the churning of the imagination (116.11–117.7) or the simple need to satisfy some immediate bodily need (97.5–12). Ḥayy is said to resent his body's need for food, drink, and sexual intercourse (106.9), but the first two are nonetheless accepted as genuine primitive needs while the third drive seems curiously out of place, seeing as how Ḥayy has never had the occasion to develop any sexual appetites (see Richter-Bernburg 1996, 107–9). In any case, Ḥayy effortlessly turns away from the passions (*hawā*) as soon as he recognizes them for what they are, vestiges of material attachments (95.12–96.4); moral censure or references to the lower soul are entirely absent in Ibn Ṭufayl's assessment of Ḥayy—they only arise when Ḥayy later criticizes human society. Philosophically speaking, there is nary a trace in *Ḥayy* of the "reformation of morals" literature in which earlier thinkers such as Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAdī and Miskawayh dabbled, but also Avicenna; what is more remarkable is how Ibn Ṭufayl suppresses the theme of self-mortification and self-rebuke in al-Ghazālī, in whose works it assumes overriding importance.[8]

This doubtless reflects the extent to which Ḥayy is supposed to be the perfect human being, one whose bodily constitution and temperament make him more impervious to wrongful inclinations than most (just as they make him more susceptible to the blazing light of divinely inspired intuitive illumination). At the same time, Ḥayy's moral innocence may reflect Ibn Ṭufayl's reading of al-Ghazālī's insistence that bad habits and erroneous evaluations are taught, reinforced, and amplified by society (see Kukkonen 2016). In fact, *Ḥayy* can, if one so wishes, be read as an extended thought experiment of a rather different kind than is usually thought. Instead of asking whether the individual human being is capable of reaching a full understanding of herself and the cosmic order with no recourse either to revelation or the aid of a philosophical school—the answer to that is plainly yes—the work might be seen to inquire into the preconditions of such a feat. How clean does the slate have to be for such perfection to come into being spontaneously and without guidance? The answer appears to be "very": Ḥayy's naturally perfect physiological and moral makeup needs to be met by a nurturing environment free of entrenched misconceptions and false reasonings. Only under such circumstances will Avicenna's "sacred" mode of cognition operate at peak efficiency and reality be disclosed unproblematically to the individual for what it is and how it is.

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[8] Noticeably, Asāl and Salāmān, in addition to scrupulously maintaining external observance, are said to exercise vigilance over the soul and to struggle against the passions (*muḥāsibat al-nafs wa-mujāhidat al-hawā*: 137.3–4). The two are central Sufi concepts, each proscribing a wide range of character-forming activities.

This helps to explain the disappointment experienced by Ḥayy when he finally comes into contact with human society and its understanding of a religious tradition set down by a lawgiver. Ḥayy first meets another human being like himself at the age of fifty: this is Asāl, a spiritual seeker in his own right. Asāl recognizes right away Ḥayy's exceptional qualities and desires to emulate him as a model of sanctity, thus creating the opportunity for Ḥayy to act as a final cause in the manner mentioned above (*Ḥayy*, 144.13–145.4, 154.12: this appears to be Ibn Ṭufayl's Neoplatonic explanation for the Sufi relation of master and disciple; see Kukkonen 2008, 200–202). There is never any question about how Asāl's received opinions are made to align with Ḥayy's hard-won wisdom: Asāl recognizes Ḥayy's superior authority right away and is prepared to interpret his inherited religious beliefs allegorically (*taʾwīl*). Ḥayy, meanwhile, remains exactly as he was, simply affirming that nothing stated by Asāl opposes what his independent reasoning had already taught him (145).

The story is different when Ḥayy meets the rest of Asāl's community (which goes unspecified, but closely resembles a monotheist society complete with a divinely inspired lawgiver as its past founder). Not one of these people is able to let go of the established notions and set interpretations that had hardened around their understanding of their prophet's message. Under such adversity, Ḥayy has no choice but to retreat again: the pessimism recalls Ibn Bājja's earlier description of philosophers in a hostile society as weeds and strangers (*Rasāʾil*, 42–43) and his recommendation that under such circumstances, isolation is preferable to persecution (90–91). *Ḥayy*'s disillusioned account of human shortcomings and sectarian strife plainly takes up after al-Ghazālī, especially the famous veils section of the *Niche of Lights* (152–53). The people on Asāl and Salāmān's island are said to have made their passions into their god and to serve only their appetites (*Ḥayy*, 151.2–4). Neither preaching nor eloquence will reach them, while dialectical disputation may actually make matters worse.

Ibn Ṭufayl is thus even more pessimistic than al-Ghazālī inasmuch as he holds no hope for an inner reformation of existing religious practices, the way al-Ghazālī does in his *Revival*. Ḥayy concludes that the only benefit established religion has for the majority has to do with the present life: religious law (*sharīʿa*) allows commoners to aright their lives and to remain safe from one another's depredations (152.5–6). This leads to some strikingly bold proclamations when it comes to the afterlife. Being scarcely more than animals themselves, the best that can be hoped for the majority upon death is a fade into something close to nothingness;[9] as for those who forsake even the formalities of religion, a harsher judgment of hellfire and eternal torment awaits (131.1–6, 152.8–9). Thus when Ibn Ṭufayl criticizes al-Fārābī for the latter's denial of an afterlife (14.1–5), saying that such a view leads to despair and moral despondence, what he actually intends is that such doubts should never be entertained in public: Ḥayy warns sternly against any innovation (*bidʿa*) or speculation on the part of those unequipped to handle it (153–54). What remains implicit—one of the few things remaining behind "a thin veil" (156)—is that beyond administering to the common masses (*al-jumhūr al-ʿawāmm*), religion appears to hold no deeper benefit for anybody. Ḥayy, after all, reaches his superior understanding of the higher truths wholly independent of the law. Ibn Ṭufayl thus tacitly endorses another facet of al-Fārābī's teaching that he officially condemns, namely, that philosophy is preferable to prophecy, which in al-Fārābī results from an exercise of the imaginative faculty (*quwwa khayāliyya*: 14.7–8). We are left to wonder whether this might constitute the origin of revealed religion in Ibn Ṭufayl's mind as well.

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[9] This, I take it, is the fate envisioned for Asāl's friends: cleaving to likenesses of divine matters rather than their reality, such simple-minded religious believers have squandered their original rational potential but not militated against it, which makes them akin to lights grown dim, though not quite extinguished, and essences close to unraveling (131.6–8). If this is "the only avenue of salvation"

11.6. CONCLUSION

Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān survives in at least eleven Arabic manuscripts (Conrad 1996b, 268–71). Its initial popularity within the Islamic world is shown by the fact that within a century of its publication, the medical author Ibn al-Nafīs wrote a piece in explicit imitation of *Ḥayy* in which, however, the two traditions brought into alignment are natural reason and Ashʿarite prophetology (see Schacht and Meyerhof 1968). Still, despite occasional references to Ibn Ṭufayl and to *Ḥayy*, the work appears to have become marginalized fairly quickly. This is likely due to a combination of *Ḥayy*'s doctrinal idiosyncrasies and its author's overall limited output. With most of the excitement post-Rāzī moving in the direction of large *kalām* handbooks and compendia, Ibn Ṭufayl will have appeared a fairly marginal operator. In the last century, *Ḥayy* has enjoyed a real surge in popularity.

Ḥayy's impact on European thought has been the object of several studies, ranging from the foundational to the minute to the fanciful. (For a wide-ranging study see Ben-Zaken 2010.) That *Ḥayy*'s influence should have peaked in the early eighteenth century is not surprising, given the contending strands of spiritualism and naturalism that animated discussions across the subcontinent. Overall, subsequent waves of *Ḥayy* appreciation appear to have veered between the poles of Islamic naturalism and mysticism, as the two-part title of Sami Hawi's monograph (1974) puts it. But if this is true, then such a curious state of affairs calls for comment. Leaving aside questions related to organized religion, is *Ḥayy* really a book of two halves—the naturalist and the mystical—with two messages fundamentally at odds with each other?

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available to ordinary believers (154.4–5), and this the only reasonably expectation for them, then one can understand why Ibn Ṭufayl would not wish to dwell on the matter. What is surprising is that state censorship allowed him to publish something so explicit.

There can be no gainsaying the sharp turn that Ḥayy's story takes once he recognizes his otherworldly destiny. At the same time, the path that Ḥayy takes to God, congruent with the book's intentions, is determined as much by the subject matter as by the force of narrative considerations. The portrait of reality that emerges from a full reading of *Ḥayy* may not differ overly much from the one found in al-Fārābī, Avicenna, or al-Ghazālī: but the mere fact that Ibn Ṭufayl approaches his topic from the bottom up serves to differentiate his treatise from the top-down presentations favored, for example, by al-Fārābī in his *Principles of the Opinions* and *Governance of the City* (*al-Madīna al-fāḍila* and *al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, both mentioned in *Ḥayy*, 13.12–14). This ordering principle is hardly coincidental. It appears that for Ibn Ṭufayl, we must start from where we are, and build our understanding of reality from there (cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* I.1).

Furthermore, even if all worldly connotations must be left behind once one enters the divine domain, the force of such an apophatic act derives in part from the precision with which various things are being denied of God. To conclude, as Ḥayy does, that God is not a body, in a sense constitutes only the first and most elementary step in the construction of Muslim orthodoxy, according to both standard *kalām* heresiographies and al-Ghazālī in the *Niche of Lights* (a work on which Ibn Ṭufayl explicitly relies). One must also get clear on what exactly it means to be embodied, and in this task—quite especially, in pushing aside *kalām* atomism—a didactic approach can be helpful that lets the reader explore in depth the hylomorphic structure of nature purportedly uncovered by the Peripatetics (with the added dynamism provided by the Andalusi emphasis on powers). A thoroughgoing exploration of what constitutes the being of sublunary beings also pays dividends when it comes to developing a due appreciation for the rich emanation of God's bounty. This realization in *Ḥayy* does not form a premise in an argument for God's existence (88–89); instead, it is adduced post facto as a basis for understanding how we, too, may come to extend this benign divine influence, for example, through the preservation of all natural species and an effort to help them flourish (*Ḥayy*, 110–11, 114–15). This charming ecological message about each natural kind having its own dignity and purpose in life, though it is clearly theologically predicated (Kukkonen 2008, 191–92), relieves somewhat the unremitting otherworldliness at which *Ḥayy* ultimately arrives, even as it gives a ready-made lesson for the novice reader that can be easily applied in the here and now. It is to Ibn Ṭufayl's credit as an author (though not to our credit as a society) that this aspect of *Ḥayy* resonates so deeply today.

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CHAPTER 12

SUHRAWARDĪ'S (D. 1191) *INTIMATIONS OF THE TABLET AND THE THRONE*

The Relationship of Illuminationism and the Peripatetic Philosophy

JOHN WALBRIDGE

12.1. Introduction

THE *Intimations of the Tablet and the Throne* (*al-Talwīḥāt al-lawḥiyya wa-l-ʿarshiyya*) is a Peripatetic work by a Platonic philosopher, a work written to assist those able to reach the Platonic heights and to suffice those incapable of turning away from the material world and breaking free of its bonds (Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶3). The purpose of this chapter is to determine what this means.

There is not a great deal to say about the life of the philosopher Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Amīrak al-Suhrawardī—Shaykh al-Ishrāq, "the Master of Illumination," as he is known in the later Islamic philosophical tradition. The sources are fragmentary, and modern scholarly analysis of them has not always been as thorough as one might wish. He was born in northwestern Iran in about 550/1155, perhaps in the village of Suhraward, from which he takes his name. He studied in the nearby town of Marāgha with a teacher of moderate prominence who also taught Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 609/1210). He then studied in Isfahan, where one of his early works, *The Garden of Hearts* (*Bustān al-qulūb*) was written. He seems to have spent the rest of his life moving from place to place in Syria and among the petty emirates of Anatolia, for he mentions at the end of his longest Peripatetic work, *The Paths and Havens* (*al-Mashāriʿ, al-Ilāhiyyāt*, 505) that he had nearly reached the age of thirty, probably in the early 580s/mid-1180s, but that despite his wanderings he had failed to find an intellectual companion. Biographical sources describe him living an unsettled life, dressed as a particularly shabby dervish, and surrounded by a group of disciples and sometimes displaying his skill with magic (Shahrazūrī, *Nuzha*, 119–29). One of the very few certain dates associated with him is the completion of *The Philosophy of Illumination* on the last day of Jumādā II 582 / 15 September 1186, a date he mentions because it coincided with an extraordinary conjunction of the seven Ptolemaic planets (*Illumination*, ¶279). At some point he found his way to Syria, for he is known to have visited Damascus and was executed in Aleppo at Saladin's orders in about 587/1191, though even the exact year is not certain. He is said to have debated the more conventional clerics, claiming that God could create another prophet, a doctrine that would have raised suspicions of Ismāʿīlism. It also seems likely that the strategic importance of Aleppo in the face of the looming threat of the Third Crusade may have played a role in his condemnation (Walbridge 2000, 201–10; Abū Rayyān 1952).

Entertaining as are many of the anecdotes preserved about his life, the most important biographical fact about him is known from comments he himself makes in his own works—that he was trained as a conventional Avicennan but "converted" to Platonism after he had written his earliest works. He portrays this conversion as the result of a dream in which Aristotle appears and tells him the solution to a central problem of epistemology, mentioning that the true heirs of the ancients—meaning the line from Pythagoras and Empedocles to Plato—are the Sufis, not the Avicennan philosophers of Suhrawardī's time. Mystical experience also plays a role by confirming the existence of the Platonic Forms (*Illumination*, ¶166; *al-Talwīḥāt, al-Ilāhiyyāt*, 1.70–74; Ibn Kammūna, *Sharḥ*, 3.371–84).

12.2. The Problem of Suhrawardī's Peripatetic and Illuminationist Works

Suhrawardī is now best known for his brilliant allegories, mostly in Persian, and for a major Neoplatonic work expounding a metaphysics of light, *The Philosophy of Illumination* (*Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*), thus giving his school its name, *Ishrāqī*, "Illuminationist." In the introduction to *The Philosophy of Illumination*, he explains that it represents a break with his other philosophical works, which he describes as "Peripatetic," because it uses a new method based on mystical intuition. It is, in fact, a characteristically Neoplatonic work, and Suhrawardī takes pains to situate himself in the Platonic tradition:

> Before I wrote this book and during the times when interruptions prevented me from working on it, I wrote other books in which I have summarized for you the principles of the Peripatetics according to their method. Among these books is the short work known as *The Intimations of the Tablet and the Throne.* Many principles are summarized in it despite its brevity. Then there is my book, *The Flashes*

> *of Light* (*al-Lamaḥāt*). I also have composed other works, some in my youth. But the present work has another method and a shorter path to knowledge than their method. It is more orderly and precise, less painful to study. I did not first arrive at it through cogitation, but rather it was acquired through something else. Subsequently I sought proof for it so that should I cease contemplating the proof, nothing would make me fall into doubt. (Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶3)

He goes on to explain that his four mature Peripatetic works are a propaedeutic and sufficient for those who do not have the spiritual gifts to pursue the Illuminationist philosophy of mystical intuition. This implies a twofold line between the Peripatetic and the Platonic in his works: between early Peripatetic works and later Platonic works and between later propaedeutic Peripatetic works and later Platonic works.

The tendency among modern scholars has been to focus on his allegories, for their literary qualities and supposed mystical depth, and on *The Philosophy of Illumination*, because it presumably contains his "real" views. Nevertheless, the Peripatetic works should not be ignored; they contain the vast bulk of his philosophical writing, were in some cases written simultaneously with or even after *The Philosophy of Illumination*, and were widely read and commented on by later Muslim philosophers. Moreover, *The Philosophy of Illumination* was mostly commonly read through commentaries written in a Peripatetic style and drawing on the Peripatetic works. I will discuss the philosophical relations between *The Philosophy of Illumination* and the Peripatetic works, concentrating on his most widely read Peripatetic work, *The Intimations of Tablet and Throne*, and his collection of glosses on it, *The Points at Issue* (*al-Muqāwamāt*), as well as the best-known commentary on *The Intimations. The Flashes of Light* (*al-Lamaḥāt*) is a rather elementary introduction to philosophy that is of much less importance here. Before dealing with the question of the philosophical relations between *The Intimations* and *The Philosophy of Illumination*, I must mention two matters bearing on the general interpretation of Suhrawardī's works: the dating and order of his works and the general framework for interpreting them.

Suhrawardī was not in the habit of dating his works, *The Philosophy of Illumination* being the only exception I know of, and seemingly no manuscripts survive from his hand or from his lifetime. The main evidences, therefore, for the order in which his works were written are the passage quoted above, cross-references between works, and evidences of doctrinal development, particularly whether the works show evidence of his conversion to Platonism. The value of the last is much diminished by the fact that he claims to have continued to write in the Peripatetic style for those not able to deal with Illuminationism. Suhrawardī's own classification of his works in *The Philosophy of Illumination* is juvenilia, mature Peripatetic works, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, and other mature works.

Juvenilia, before ca. 575/1180: *Temples of Light* (*Hayākil al-nūr*), allegories
Mature Peripatetic works, 575/1180 and completed by 582/1186: *Flashes, Intimations*
Philosophy of Illumination, ca. 579/1183–582/1186

Peripatetic works, completed by 582/1186: *Paths and Havens, Points at Issue*
Other short works: 575/1180–587/1191: *Tablets for ʿImād* (*al-Alwāḥ al-ʿImādiyya*)

Since *The Flashes of Light, Intimations, Points at Issue, Paths and Havens*, and *The Philosophy of Illumination* all contain cross-references to other works, we can place these five major philosophical works of Surhawardī in the following order:

Intimations: completed before *The Philosophy of Illumination*
The Philosophy of Illumination
Paths and Havens, Flashes of Light: written simultaneously with *The Philosophy of Illumination* but completed later
Points at Issue: written after the completion of *The Philosophy of Illumination* and *Paths and Havens*

Clearly, then, these works must be read together to understand Suhrawardī's mature thought.

The second matter to mention here is my general approach to the interpretation of Suhrawardī's work. The reader should note that my interpretation of Suhrawardī differs in two major respects from that held by such scholars as the late Henry Corbin and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. First, they believe that Suhrawardī considered himself to be reviving the wisdom of ancient Iran, while I believe that he saw himself mainly as a Platonist, though one with a typically Platonic penchant for invoking vaguely defined Oriental wisdom (Walbridge 2000, 2001a; Ziai 1996a). Second, their interpretation of his doctrines is primarily mystical and esoteric—perennialist, in particular—and may be epitomized by Corbin's translation of *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* as *théosophie orientale* or *sagesse orientale.* My own view is that Suhrawardī was primarily a philosopher, though one with a keen interest in how mysticism might be used as a tool of philosophical inquiry. These disagreements lead to significant differences of interpretation, notably regarding which works and which aspects of his thought should be stressed. Corbin, Nasr, and their followers tend to emphasize the importance of the allegories and the esoteric interpretation of the terminology of light used in *The Philosophy of Illumination.* I consider the allegories to be either juvenilia or elementary introductions to basic mystical, philosophical, and scientific ideas, since they lack reference to such distinctive Illuminationist doctrines as the Platonic Forms. My views on *The Philosophy of Illumination* will become clear in the following pages.

12.3. THE ILLUMINATIONISM OF *THE PHILOSOPHY OF ILLUMINATION*

Obviously, the central problem in understanding Suhrawardī's thought is to determine what Illuminationism is. It is, at the least, the doctrine set forth in *The Philosophy of Illumination* and, in particular, the two dozen or so propositions identified there as

"Illuminationist." Moreover, the third part of the logic, the *sophismata*, of *The Philosophy of Illumination* consists largely of a series of about fifteen "judgments between Illuminationist and Peripatetic doctrines." These are mostly specific criticisms of Avicenna, dealing with such issues as the nature of existence, the Platonic Forms, matter theory, and various technical points of logic. (There is also a critique of *kalām* atomism.) These Illuminationist doctrines are either discussed in his Peripatetic works, tacitly passed over, or contradicted. There are also points of tension among the Peripatetic works, with the *Points at Issue*, for example, correcting the *Intimations*. These works also give an indication of how we are to understand *The Philosophy of Illumination* itself. It is clearly not meant simply to supplant the Peripatetic works, which therefore can shed light on the interpretation of its more ecstatic language. It will also give some indication of the real influence of Suhrawardī's doctrines on later Islamic philosophy.

The bulk of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of four of these "Illuminationist" doctrines and how they are dealt with in *The Intimations* and related works. However, it is first necessary to describe *The Intimations* and its glosses, *The Points at Issue.*

12.4. THE *INTIMATIONS OF THE TABLET AND THE THRONE* AND THE *POINTS AT ISSUE*

The Intimations of the Tablet and the Throne is a work of moderate difficulty and of moderate size—about fifty-five thousand words—divided into sections on logic, physics, and metaphysics.[1] The language is that of Avicenna, whose *Hints and Admonitions* (*al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*) seems to be the model for *The Intimations*. Certain points are labeled as "of the tablet" (*ʿarshiyya*) or "of the throne" (*lawḥiyya*), but even Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284) admits to not understanding what these terms distinguish (*Sharḥ*, 1.330). The work was popular by the end of the seventh/thirteenth century, with commentaries by Ibn Kammūna and Shahrazūrī and several surviving manuscripts dating from that century. I know of at least forty manuscripts of the whole or parts of the work, sixty-one of Ibn Kammūna's commentary, including Judeo-Arabic fragments from the former library of the Karaite Rav Simha Synagogue in Cairo (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2006, 70, 75–76, 225–27), and six manuscripts of Shahrazūrī's commentary, almost as many as the surviving manuscripts of *The Philosophy of Illumination* and its commentaries. It was well known to later authors such as Mullā Ṣadrā.

The Points at Issue is also known at the *Addenda* or *Glosses* (*lawāḥiq*) *to the Intimations.* Suhrawardī explains that this book consists of corrections (*iṣlāḥ*) to *The Intimations* based on what had been passed down from the ancients (*Oeuvres*, 1:124).

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[1] The metaphysics of *The Intimations* was published in a critical edition by Henry Corbin in 1945, and the logic by ʿAlī-Akbar Fayyāḍ in 1955. Both are now supplanted by Najafqulī Ḥabībī's critical edition of Ibn Kammūna's *Sharḥ al-Talwīḥāt al-lawḥiyya wa-l-ʿarshiyya.*

It was thus intended as a sort of Illuminationist commentary on *The Intimations*. He explains that this material could not be included in the latter work due to the concision of its plan and style. This book is about four-fifths the length of the work it comments on and consists of explanations of particular points, typically of a paragraph to a page in length, interspersed with questions and answers. The topics tend to be technical and, as Suhrawardī indicates, would not have been suitable for the generally intermediate level of *The Intimations*. There is no indication of where or when the book was written or its precise occasion. However, since it is a commentary on *The Intimations* and comments on this work from the point of view of *The Philosophy of Illumination*, it must have been written after both of these works—that is, sometime after Jumādā II 582 / September 1186, when the latter work was completed—and certainly after *The Paths and Havens*, which it cites frequently. Given its noticeably haphazard structure, I suspect that it was compiled either from his answers to questions or from his marginal notes on a copy of *The Intimations*. Apart from the division into logic, physics, and metaphysics, there are no chapter divisions. I know of only four manuscripts, and only the section on metaphysics has been published. Despite its relative rarity, the book was known to both Ibn Kammūna and Shahrazūrī.

The commentators felt free to draw on the so-called Peripatetic works in explicating *The Philosophy of Illumination* and vice versa. Shahrazūrī wrote commentaries on both *The Philosophy of Illumination* and *The Intimations*. Later writers like Mullā Ṣadrā cite the Peripatetic works alongside *The Philosophy of Illumination*. *The Temples of Light*, one of the juvenilia if the commentator Quṭb al-Dīn is to be believed, is the most frequently commented one of al-Suhrawardī's works and is commonly found in collections of textbooks. Though the evidence is preliminary, premodern Islamic scholars and commentators seem to have treated his works as a whole without dismissing either the juvenilia or the Peripatetic works as having been superseded by *The Philosophy of Illumination*.

Finally, the manuscript evidence also indicates that premodern Islamic philosophers saw *The Philosophy of Illumination* and his Peripatetic works as part of a single philosophical project. The most common of Suhrawardī's philosophical works in manuscript are *The Temples of Light*, an elementary Peripatetic work apparently used as a textbook; *The Philosophy of Illumination*, most commonly in the form of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's commentary; and *The Intimations*, most commonly in the form of Ibn Kammūna's commentary. The Persian allegories, so popular nowadays, are typically represented by only a dozen or so manuscripts each and seem to have been transmitted separately.

At this point something must be said about Ibn Kammūna and his commentary on *The Intimations*. Ibn Kammūna was a Baghdadi Jew and one of the three promoters of Suhrawardī's works in the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century, the others being the somewhat mysterious Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī and the very famous scientist Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. One very plausible account of the reception of Suhrawardī's works is that they were largely ignored for over half a century after his execution and the scattering of his disciples, only to be rediscovered by Ibn Kammūna on a visit to Aleppo (Langermann 2007; but see Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2006, 137–38). Ibn Kammūna then wrote a commentary on *The Intimations* properly known as *The Revisions in*

Commentary on the Intimations (*al-Tanqīḥāt fī Sharḥ al-Talwīḥāt*). This was probably the source for Shahrazūrī's commentary with the same title. Shahrazūrī in turn wrote a commentary on *The Philosophy of Illumination*, which was then used—"plagiarized" might be a better term—by Shīrāzī for his own commentary on the same work.

In his commentary on *The Intimations*, Ibn Kammūna frequently cites other works of Suhrawardī, most commonly *The Paths and Havens* and *The Philosophy of Illumination*. He cites *The Points at Issue* by title at least once (Ibn Kammūna, *Sharḥ*, 3.313), but the learned editor identifies several other passages that refer to this work by phrases such as "in another of his books." He also seems to have known *The Tablets for ʿImād*. His other main sources are the works of Avicenna, in particular *The Hints and Admonitions* and to a lesser extent *The Healing*. A careful and intelligent commentator, Ibn Kammūna typically reads *The Intimations* first against Avicenna, identifying points where Suhrawardī's views are novel or unconventional, and then against *The Philosophy of Illumination*, looking for apparent inconsistencies between the two works or using one of them to explain the other. *The Paths and Havens*, the fullest of Suhrawardī's philosophical works, then becomes the key by which he unravels puzzles and complexities. In general, Ibn Kammūna tries to interpret the text sympathetically.

The important point here is that Ibn Kammūna understands Suhrawardī's works to form a coherent whole in which the mature Peripatetic works and *The Philosophy of Illumination* can be understood in terms of each other. The discussions that follow will test whether that view can be justified.

12.5. The Relation of the Peripatetic Works to *The Philosophy of Illumination*

It is customary to refer to Suhrawardī's distinctive philosophical position as "Illuminationism," *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* or simply *ishrāq*. On one level, the question of what "Illuminationism" means is straightforward enough: Illumination is mystical experience, or at least such mystical experience as leads to philosophical insight, or perhaps mystical experience that is based on philosophical insight. The introduction to *The Philosophy of Illumination* says that the philosophy of illumination is that which "I have obtained through my intuition (*dhawq*) during my retreats and visions," an "intuitive philosophy" to be contrasted with a "discursive philosophy (*baḥth*)" (¶¶2, 4). The introduction to the metaphysics of *The Paths and Havens* uses the phrase "Illumination is your path, O God" (Suhrawardī, *Oeuvres*, 1:196), a phrase that Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī also uses to open his *Commentary on the Philosophy of Illumination*. A similar expression closes Suhrawardī's *Temples of Light*. A second answer might be that Illuminationism is the philosophical system contained in *The Philosophy of Illumination;* on this, at least, Suhrawardī is clear enough. If *The Philosophy of*

Illumination were the only book that he had written or if his other works resembled it, all would be reasonably clear, and it would be simply a matter of interpreting that book on its own terms. Unfortunately, his other books do not resemble *The Philosophy of Illumination*. On the one hand, there are the Peripatetic works, which resemble it in being manuals of philosophy, and on the other there are the allegories and the occult works, which obviously have to do with mysticism but differ from it in not being philosophy.

In what follows I will examine the doctrines that Suhrawardī specifically labels as "Illuminationist" (*ishrāqī*) in *The Philosophy of Illumination*. There are about two dozen of these, depending on how they are counted. Most are labeled as an "Illuminationist rule" (*qāʿida ishrāqiyya*) or something of the sort, though there are others that the context identifies as distinctive. These I will then compare with the corresponding portions of the "Peripatetic" works.

Unlike the Peripatetic works, which are divided into the three sciences of logic, physics, and metaphysics, *The Philosophy of Illumination* is divided into two parts: "The Rules of Thought" and "On the Divine Lights, the Light of Lights, and the Bases and Order of Existence." The first part includes an elementary introduction to logic and some *sophismata*, most of which consists of "judgments (*ḥukūmāt*) between Peripatetic and Illuminationist doctrines." The second part is divided into five chapters, dealing with ontology, philosophical theology, physics, and religion respectively.

If we look at the doctrines that are labeled in one way or another as "Illuminationist" and combine some related topics, we find the following mentioned:

Logic
  Under terms, rejection of the Peripatetic theory of definition
  Under propositions, inclusion of negation in the predicate
  Under inference, reduction of all syllogisms to the first figure
Fallacies
  A new account of substance and attribute
  Intellectual intentions (*iʿtibārāt ʿaqliyya*)
  Rejection of Peripatetic definition
  Denial of hylomorphism
  Denial of atomism and vacuum
  Inadequacy of Peripatetic proofs for the immortality of the soul
  Acceptance of Platonic Forms
  Possibility of simple effects from composite causes
  Denial of the corporeality of radiation
  Vision and hearing by presence
  A theory of forms in mirrors

- The theory of lights
    - The nature of unity
    - Self-knowledge
    - God's knowledge by presence
    - Ontological causation
    - Reality of imagination
    - Reincarnation

Some of these are interrelated, so that the theory of composite causation is needed to support his theory of Platonic Forms, and his rejection of vacuum is a correlate of his replacement of hylomorphism with a theory that body is self-subsistent magnitude.

The obvious way to understand the relationship between the philosophy of illumination—presumably the doctrines to be found in *The Philosophy of Illumination*—and the Peripatetic works is to see how the specifically Illuminationist doctrines are treated in the Peripatetic works. If the content of a work such as *The Intimations* agrees in doctrine with the works of Avicenna as it agrees with them in language and style, then we may simply dismiss the Peripatetic works as Avicennan digests of limited interest for understanding the Illuminationist philosophy. If, however, they contain doctrines identical to or in dialogue with the doctrines of *The Philosophy of Illumination*, then the matter will be more complex and the way in which we approach Suhrawardī's philosophy will need to be reconsidered. This will also give us some basis for sorting out which works can be dismissed as juvenilia—works that Suhrawardī himself indicates do not represent his mature views.

In this chapter I will consider five of these issues: the rejection of the Peripatetic theory of essential definition, the rejection of hylomorphism, the intentionality of existence and other similar concepts, the affirmation of Platonic Forms, and reincarnation. These represent basic disagreements with Avicenna in four areas of philosophy: logic, physics, metaphysics, and philosophical theology. I might also have chosen to deal with two other fundamental complexes of doctrine: knowledge by presence and its related theories of sensation and the problem of imagination. These epistemological doctrines, however, rest on basic philosophical approaches that also show themselves in the issues of definition, intentionality, and the Platonic Forms, so these latter will suffice here.

12.6. ESSENTIAL DEFINITION

The theory of essential definition—ὅρος in Greek, *ḥadd* in Arabic—goes back to the biographical fact that Aristotle by training and temperament was a biologist. His notion of things that could be properly classified was based on the natural kinds of living things. Classification was, therefore, not arbitrary. All horses and all animals formed real classes;

all brown things and all featherless things did not. The dialectician, as Plato has Socrates remark, is a skilled butcher who carves reality at the joints (*Phaedrus* 265E, *Statesman* 287C). We cannot simply create kinds by grouping things according to some arbitrary set of attributes. Moreover, not all attributes of things belonging to a real class are relevant in identifying them, only those attributes that are "essential" to what the thing is. Therefore, whiteness is not an essential attribute of a human being because not all human beings are white, nor is being bipedal because, although all normal human beings have two legs, that is not a property that makes them human, both because there are other things that have two legs and because having two legs is simply not essential to what it is to be a human. Therefore, to know something, it is necessary to know what larger class a thing belongs to essentially—animal for man and horse, for example—and the essential properties—differentia, rationality for man—that distinguish that thing from other things in its genus. Thus, a thing can be made truly known by a definition consisting of the thing's genus and all its differentia. Thus, the definition "rational animal" makes known what a human being is essentially, while "featherless biped" does not, even though the latter serves to distinguish human beings from everything else. An underlying assumption is that we can examine instances of a natural kind and recognize those attributes that are essential to the thing being what it is. The strength of this theory, which Aristotelians labored to make work for almost two thousand years, is that it promises real knowledge of real kinds. The weakness is that it proved to be remarkably hard to implement as an actual program, as indicated by the fact that the Aristotelians were unable to produce a body of convincing definitions and were still using the same examples—man, horse, and the like—a millennium after Aristotle first propounded the theory.

Suhrawardī savages this theory in *The Philosophy of Illumination*, arguing that "the Peripatetics have made it impossible for anything at all to be defined" (¶70).[2] We can begin to see the relationship between the Peripatetic works and *The Philosophy of Illumination* by examining how the question of essential definition is framed in *The Intimations*. "The complete essential definition is the expression that signifies the quiddity of the thing, combines all its constituents, and is compounded in its source realities from its genera and differentia. . . . The object of the essential definition is the conception of the core of the thing as it actually is. Distinction then follows from that" (Suhrawardī, *Intimations*, 1.63, ¶1.40–41; Ibn Kammūna, *Sharḥ*, 1.63, ¶40–41).[3] This differs from Avicenna's similar definition in that it requires the enumeration of all of the differentia. Dispensing with the complexities, Suhrawardī argues in the section on terms in *The Philosophy of Illumination* that it is impossible to know the differentiae—or, at any rate, to know that one knows them. If a differentia is known through something else, it is not specific to the thing being defined, whereas if it is specific to the thing and is known, then the thing defined will already be known, and the definition will not yield new knowledge. Moreover, even if you know some of the differentiae, you cannot know that you know all of them. To this the Peripatetic can only make the feeble reply that if there were other differentiae, he would have known them, but this implies prior knowledge of the quiddity (Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶15). In the *sophismata* he returns to the issue of definition, giving examples in which the Peripatetic definitions rely on unknown or obscure differentiae. Blackness, which the Peripatetics define as a color that collects vision, is actually known directly. Color—color in general, not specific colors like black or white—is intentional[4] in his view, and "collects vision" is thoroughly obscure (Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶15; Walbridge 2000, 143–48).

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[2] Ziai and I translated this passage as ". . . to be known," but it now appears to me that this translation is incorrect. The topic of definition has been dealt with very thoroughly by Hossein Ziai (1990b 77–128). Ziai stresses that the "Peripatetic works," particularly *The Intimations, The Points at Issue*, and *The Paths and Havens*, are part of the same Illuminationist program as *The Philosophy of Illumination* (Ziai, 1996a, 1996b).

[3] The logic and physics of *The Intimations* are cited according to the page numbers of the Ḥabībī edition of Ibn Kammūna's commentary. The paragraph numbers correspond to the lemmas in each volume and, when they exist, the paragraph divisions within the lemmas in this edition. I plan to use these paragraph numbers in my forthcoming translation of *The Intimations.* For the metaphysics, I will also give the page numbers of Corbin's edition.

How then does this critique relate to the account of essential definition in the Peripatetic works? The account of essential definition in *The Intimations* seems to have been set up to fail on two grounds. First, *The Intimations* stresses that it is necessary to include all the essential properties since the point is to grasp the essence of the thing, not just distinguish it from other things, but *The Philosophy of Illumination* makes clear that such an exhaustive inventory of essential attributes is impossible. Second, *The Philosophy of Illumination* has also shown that the most fundamental conceptions are grasped directly and with ease but that Peripatetic essential definitions rely on genera that are intentional, having no reality outside the mind, and differentiae that are thoroughly obscure. Finally, the concise and biting critiques of *The Philosophy of Illumination* are worked out in detail in Peripatetic language in *The Paths and Havens*, where among other things Suhrawardī points out that the components of the essential definition do not correspond to real parts of the thing (Suhrawardī, *al-Mashāriʿ: al-Manṭiq*, 83–89; Ziai 1990b, 104–14). The final Peripatetic work, *The Points at Issue*, briefly discusses a few points—the superiority of essential over descriptive definition and the impossibility of defining sensibles—and then refers the reader to *The Paths and Havens* (¶M1.36; S55b–56a).[5]

Therefore, in the critique of Peripatetic definition, there is a clear relation between the Peripatetic works and *The Philosophy of Illumination*. *The Intimations* has stated the problem as it appears—or as it should appear—to the Peripatetics. *The Philosophy of Illumination* then shows that such definitions are impossible, and *The Paths and Havens* works out the problems in detail. The upshot is that the essential definitions that the

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[4] *Iʿtibārī*, which is to say, a product of the mind rather than a real metaphysical constituent of a thing; see below.

[5] The logic and physics of *The Points at Issue* are cited by the paragraph numbers of my forthcoming translation, followed by the folio number of MS Topkapı Sarai Ahmet III 3266/2. For references to the physics I will also include the folio number of MS Ragip Paşa 1480. For the metaphysics references are to paragraph numbers in *Oeuvres* 1.

Peripatetics rely on are impossible and that therefore knowledge of fundamental conceptions must be acquired in an Illuminationist fashion—that is, by means of knowledge by presence.

12.7. The Rejection of Hylomorphism

Aristotelians are happiest when they can explain something in terms of the synthesis of some kind of substrate and a pattern imposed on it. In Avicenna we find genus and differentia, matter and form, existence and quiddity, and body and soul. Three of the five Illuminationist doctrines dealt with in this chapter involve critiques of these syntheses. Having discussed the first of these dualities in connection with logic, I move on to the second, matter and form.

Aristotle and his followers—here we are concerned mainly with Avicenna—held that physical bodies were compounds of prime matter (ὕλη, *hayūlā*) and form (εἶδος, *ṣūra*). Prime matter was pure potentiality with no properties of its own independent of the forms that it acquired. The form gave the matter anything that it was. Actually, it is somewhat more complicated, since there could be hierarchies of forms: fundamental qualities, elements, species forms, and attributes of various kinds. The most vigorous rival to this system was atomism, both Democritean and Epicurean among the Greeks and *kalām* atomism among the Muslims. Plato was not especially concerned with this issue, but a distinctive Platonic theory, to which I will return presently, can be derived from the *Timaeus*.

Suhrawardī devotes several pages of his *sophismata* to a critique of the Peripatetic doctrine of hylomorphism—the theory that bodies are composites of matter and form, the largest space devoted in this section to the critique of any Avicennan doctrine (Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶72–88). The Peripatetics, by which as usual he means mainly Avicenna, argue that since body admits of both connection and division but connection does not admit of division, there must be a substrate to bodies that admits of both, the magnitude of which is an accident of the form. Suhrawardī is temperamentally averse to metaphysical entities that cannot be reached by some sort of sensible or intuitive perception, so he rejects the whole notion of a prime matter that cannot exist except in some specific form. In this he is following a minority interpretation of the Platonic notion of the receptacle within which material things come to be. Instead, bodies consist of self-subsistent magnitude with accidents, an interpretation that he may have derived from some of the late-antique commentators and that was later advocated by Descartes (Plato, *Timaeus* 48E–50E; Walbridge 2005a). He follows this with a critique of *kalām* atomism, with a paragraph rejecting the main argument for atoms—that bodies must ultimately have indivisible parts—and another rejecting the possibility of vacuum on the basis of his critique of prime matter—that since it has magnitude, it must be body (Walbridge 2012).

Suhrawardī's handling of this topic in his Peripatetic works is particularly puzzling. Shorter works like *The Flashes of Light* and *The Book of Radiance* simply give a standard Peripatetic account of prime matter and form. The account of matter and form in the physics of *The Intimations* likewise follows the general Peripatetic view, establishing in successive brief chapters that body is composed of prime matter and form, that neither can exist without the other, and what the relation between the two is. This account is neither long nor detailed, but it does hint at difficulties relating to the metaphysical nature of prime matter and the related entity, extension. The matter becomes more complicated in *The Points at Issue*, where he argues that prime matter is simply body, a position very similar to that in *The Philosophy of Illumination*.

The commentators were well aware of these seeming inconsistencies. Ibn Kammūna observes, "One might suppose that there is a contradiction between the discussion in this book and the one in *The Philosophy of Illumination*, but such is not the case. The reason is that he does not mean the same thing by 'magnitude' and 'extension' here that he does in that other book" (*Sharḥ*, 3.66). This arises in the course of a discussion of the mathematical body, raising the question of how a mathematical quantity can be the foundation for a substance. Suhrawardī himself returns to the topic at length in *The Paths and Havens* in arguments far too complex to summarize here. To put it very simply, Suhrawardī is not prepared to accept that two nonsubstantial entities could combine to form a substance. There also seem to be aporias raised by others, Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī (fl. first half of sixth/twelfth century) among them, to be resolved.

In this case, the basic problem has been expressed in Peripatetic terms in *The Intimations*. The difficulties are then brought to the fore in the critique in the section on sophisms in *The Philosophy of Illumination*. The detailed philosophical analysis of the issue is then to be found in *The Paths and Havens*, as Ibn Kammūna recognizes.

12.8. THE INTENTIONALITY OF THE CONCEPT OF EXISTENCE

The central ontological doctrine of Suhrawardī's system is that such notions as existence, necessity, and unity are *iʿtibārāt ʿaqliyya*. This is not an easy term to translate, and I myself have tried three different renderings: "intellectual fictions," "beings of reason," and "intellectual intentions." *Iʿtibār* itself simply means "to consider" or "to take account of." The idea is not so difficult to understand. Existence, for example, is not a constituent of an existent thing in Suhrawardī's view; it is simply the concept that our minds generate when thinking about things that exist. It is not an arbitrary concept, since it can be truly or falsely predicated of something, but it is also not a part of the thing. It is, in fact, rather similar to Kant's categories (Walbridge 2014).

Suhrawardī came to this theory by considering Avicenna's ontological methods and, in particular, his famous distinction of essence (or, more exactly, quiddity) and existence

(Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶¶56–68). Avicenna had pointed out that the answer to the question of what a thing is was not the same as the answer to the question of whether the thing is, so that a thing has both a quiddity—what it is—and an existence—that it is (Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt*, 3.13–15). This, however, is tricky. Is existence an accident, as Thomas Aquinas thought Avicenna was saying? Is it like the water added to a cake mix? Most important, are the existence and quiddity of a thing two different constituents of the actual thing? In *The Philosophy of Illumination* Suhrawardī interprets Avicenna as saying so and argues that various infinite regresses result: the existence of the existence, the existence of the quiddity, the quiddity of the existence of the existence, and so on. He argues instead that things are simply there as concrete things. Their existences, quiddities, necessities, contingencies, and unities are simply the concepts we use to think about them. The issue reappears briefly in a discussion of causation in the chapter in *The Philosophy of Illumination* on cosmology where he says: "Since existence is an intellectual intention, what a thing receives from its emanating cause is its identity (*huwiyya*)" (Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶193). The context is a proof that existents require a continuing cause for their continuing existence, what we can call a sustaining cause. The two commentators, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and Shahrazūrī, state that the "identity" is the reality (*ḥaqīqa*) and the essence (*dhāt*), attributing this view to the Illuminationist sages and contrasting it with the view of the Peripatetics that it is the existence that is given when something is caused (Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ*, 416; Shahrazūrī, *Sharḥ*, 446).

Western scholarship has not taken much account of this aspect of Suhrawardī's metaphysics, mostly because such technical ontological discussions cannot be fit into the portrait of Suhrawardī as theosophist. Later Islamic philosophers did, however, taking his critique of Avicenna's ontology as sound and arguing about how to respond to it. The responses are conventionally designated as "the primacy of quiddity" and "the primacy of existence," *aṣālat al-māhiyya* and *aṣālat al-wujūd* respectively. Fortunately, the intricacies of this centuries-long dispute are beyond the scope of this chapter (Izutsu, *Concept*).[6]

If we turn to *The Intimations* and its companion, *The Points at Issue*, we find more or less the same arguments as in the section on sophisms in *The Philosophy of Illumination*, arguments based on infinite regressions of such entities as existence, contingency, and unity (Suhrawardī, *Intimations*, ¶¶3:40–48; *Oeuvres*, 1:22–26; *Points*, ¶3.36–45; *Oeuvres*, 1:22–26, 162–76). This is, it would appear, an issue that can be debated from within the

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[6] These terms, especially *aṣālat al-māhiyya*, appear to me to be somewhat loaded in favor of the view that existence is primary. I do not believe that Suhrawardī would have accepted this formulation, since he would also have considered quiddity to be intentional. The earliest formulation of the issue in this way that I am aware of is by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, who entitled the chapter in which this statement appears as "A Rule Explaining That What Is Given [*al-majʿūl*, another problem term) Is the Quiddity, Not Its Existence." This was adopted by Corbin as the chapter title in *The Philosophy of Illumination* and following him Ziai in his edition of Shahrazūrī's commentary and Ziai and myself in our edition of *The Philosophy of Illumination.* Shahrazūrī, from whom Quṭb al-Dīn seems to have largely plagiarized his commentary, does not give the chapter a title. I think that Corbin, Ziai, and I ought to have followed his example, since it seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the nuances of Suhrawardī's position.

Peripatetic intellectual universe without reference to specifically Illuminationist methods. *The Paths and Havens* also discusses this issue at length, making specific reference to *The Intimations* (Suhrawardī, *Oeuvres*, 1:340–71).

On one level, the issue at stake would appear to be the question of a sustaining cause, the cause that allows something to continue in existence after it has come into being. This was the question in the passage quoted above from *The Philosophy of Illumination*, and it is raised again in *The Intimations*. This certainly is a key idea for Suhrawardī's Neoplatonic cosmology, based as it is on continuous emanation originating from the Light of Lights, as it is called in *The Philosophy of Illumination*, or the Necessary of Existence, to use the Avicennan term employed in the Peripatetic works. More fundamentally, however, there is Suhrawardī's commitment to the view that things are known directly, the famous doctrine that came to be known as "knowledge by presence." We know things by being in their presence and intuiting them directly. In ordinary life this occurs through the senses—or in the case of our own selves through direct awareness. Spiritual entities require spiritual intuition, something that must be developed through spiritual training, but nevertheless the mystic knows God in fundamentally the same way that he knows physical objects—through being in their presence and being directly aware of them. Suhrawardī is thus temperamentally resistant to metaphysical entities that purport to be the true realities of the things of the universe but that are not directly accessible to the physical or spiritual senses.

The relationship between Suhrawardī's Peripatetic and Illuminationist sides is particularly interesting here. There is no question that this critique of Avicennan ontology is a fundamental doctrine of his new Illuminationist philosophy. It occurs among the *sophismata* of *The Philosophy of Illumination*, the place where Suhrawardī most clearly defines his differences with the Peripatetics. It has a clear function in the Illuminationist metaphysics, since it is used in the explanation of how emanation from the Light of Lights, Suhrawardī's equivalent of the Neoplatonic One, is the sustaining cause of beings in the universe. Nevertheless, it is an issue that can be argued in Peripatetic terms. Nothing in these arguments requires any special spiritual attainments. The problem is simply that the Peripatetic ontological analysis, as exemplified by Avicenna, is flawed, and these flaws can be shown in purely Peripatetic terms.

12.9. The Platonic Forms

The most characteristic Platonic teaching is the doctrine of Forms, the idea that the things in this world are pale imitations of eternal, unchanging archetypes. Prior to Suhrawardī few Islamic philosophers took this doctrine seriously. Fārābī mentions the topic in his *Harmonization of the Opinions of the Two Sages* and identifies them with the ideas in the mind of God (Fārābī, *Jamʿ*, 105–9; *Harmonization*, 160–65). Avicenna makes the same sort of objections as Aristotle did (Ibn Sīnā, *Metaphysics*, 243–56).

In *The Philosophy of Illumination*, Suhrawardī first addresses the problem of the Forms in the section on sophisms, explaining that a Peripatetic argument against the Forms is an instance of the fallacy of taking the image in place of the thing (Suhrawardī, *Illumination*, ¶¶94–95; Walbridge 1992, 61–66; Walbridge 2001b). The Peripatetic argument is that if the Form of man or horse were self-subsistent, then it could not also be found instantiated in the matter of particular men or horses. This argument is undermined, he points out, by the fact that the Peripatetics allow many such cases, for the forms of substances occur in the mind as accidents. Moreover, according to the Peripatetics the Necessary of Existence—God—is just existence, whereas existence is something superadded to all other existing things.

Suhrawardī returns to the Platonic Forms in the course of his "science of lights," where he describes them as "the horizontal order of lights." Up to this point Suhrawardī's cosmology had been structurally parallel to that of Avicenna, apart from the substitution of lights for intellects. Avicenna had held that a first intellect had emanated from the Necessary of Existence, and from that a second intellect and a body, the outer sphere, from the second intellect a third intellect and second sphere, and so on down until the series is completed with ten intellects and nine spheres. Suhrawardī does exactly the same thing, substituting lights and barriers for intellects and bodies. This is the vertical order of lights. However, he differs from Avicenna in allowing lights of equal strength to differ from others of the same strength by luminous and dark accidents. These, or some of them, are the Platonic Forms, which are the efficient, not the formal, causes of natural kinds. This, as an anonymous scholar whom I have dubbed the "Persian Platonist" wrote a century and a half later, was a new, fifth interpretation of the doctrine of Forms (Badawī, *al-Muthul*, 12–13; Walbridge 2001b, 149–59; Arnzen 2011, 230–31). By this account the Form of horse is not an ideal horse, but the celestial intellect that is the cause of the species horse.

The Intimations deals with the problem of the Forms briefly and obliquely:

> Many of the Ancients held that each one of the bodily species had an archetype and form that did not subsist in matter but that was an intellectual substance corresponding to the intelligible meaning of the reality. They often used the principle of the Most Noble Contingency to prove this. They would say, "These species are their idols and are a mark and shadows of them, but [the archetypes] are the original reality." These are the Platonic Forms. (¶¶3.124.3–5; *Oeuvres*, 1:67–68)

While this is not itself an assertion of the reality of the Forms, in fact Suhrawardī in *The Intimations* has already established the principle of the Most Noble Contingency, the doctrine that an effect on a lower ontological level must have a cause on a higher ontological level. The attentive reader will recognize the implication, as Ibn Kammūna does in his commentary (*Sharḥ*, 3.351–58), where he paraphrases the relevant passages from *The Philosophy of Illumination* (¶¶ 94–95, 164–71) and *The Paths and Havens* (Suhrawardī, *Oeuvres* 1:453–64; cf. Ibn Kammūna, *al-Kāshif*, 396–401).

Once more we have the pattern of *The Intimations* identifying the problem, *The Philosophy of Illumination* stating the Illuminationist doctrine, and *The Paths and*

Havens discussing the issue in detail, thus again demonstrating the coherence of these three works. In this case, though, the need for Illuminationist argument is clearer, since the most decisive argument for the Forms is mystical intuition.

The doctrine of Forms has an important implication for understanding the position of the allegories in Suhrawardī's body of works. The other three doctrines that I have discussed—the rejection of the Aristotelian theory of definition, the rejection of hylomorphism, and the intentionality of existence and similar concepts—are not very promising candidates for allegorization. The Platonic Forms are another matter, particularly since Suhrawardī conceives of them as angelic intellects. The allegories have two major themes. One is the fall of the soul into the world and how it can reawaken and begin on the mystical path, but this does not concern us now. The other is elementary cosmology, which is always based on Avicenna's ten-intellect system. In *A Day with a Group of Sufis*, Suhrawardī describes a gem carved into a set of ten nesting balls and a potter's wheel with ten grooves. In *The Sound of Gabriel's Wing*, he meets a group of ten old men, nine of whom each have one son conceived by a sort of spontaneous generation. Other allegories deal with different aspects of cosmology, but none of them differ in any significant way from the Peripatetic cosmology of Avicenna, though it would have been easy enough to incorporate an allegorical representation of the Forms—by giving the nine old men a great many children, for example. Since Suhrawardī himself identifies his conversion to the doctrine of the Forms as a key element in his discovery of the Illuminationist philosophy, the obvious conclusion is that these charming works either predate or deliberately avoid the Illuminationist doctrines. However, since his major Peripatetic works all deal in one way or another with the distinctive Illuminationist doctrines, the probability is that these are all or mostly early works and thus at best incidental to the Illuminationist project (Walbridge 2000, 105–12).

12.10. REINCARNATION

A final problem, reincarnation, is interesting because it deals with both the doctrines of the Ancients and the relationship between religion and philosophy. Medieval Muslim philosophers knew very well that a number of important Greek philosophers—notably Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato—had believed in reincarnation and the preexistence of the soul, as had some or most of the ancient Oriental nations. Given Suhrawardī's commitment to the wisdom of the ancients, these doctrines could not be ignored. On the other hand, Avicenna and the Peripatetics had universally rejected this doctrine, and it was anathema to mainstream Islamic theological thought, being confined among Muslims to so-called extremist Shīʿite sects. Finally, the matter would have been particularly touchy in Suhrawardī's time and place, since the one significant group that took such doctrines seriously and explored them philosophically were the Ismāʿīlīs, a sect particularly hated by Saladin, the dominant ruler in the Near East during Suhrawardī's adulthood. It was not wise to profess publicly doctrines such as reincarnation, the preexistence of the soul, and universal cycles. Thus, despite his reputation for lacking "prudence," Suhrawardī is unusually oblique in his treatment of this topic (Schmidtke 1999; Walbridge 1992, 130–49).

Islamic philosophers before Suhrawardī made a number of arguments against reincarnation, but two will be important here. First, if reincarnation were such that souls pass to and from animals and possibly plants and minerals, then there would be a mismatch in the number of souls, given the huge disparity between the small number of human beings and the enormous number of animals and plants. Second, if, as Avicenna believed, the creation of a suitable human embryo brings about the emanation of a new soul, then there would be competition for bodies between the newly emanated souls and the reincarnated souls. In his Peripatetic works, Suhrawardī repeats these and similar arguments (*al-Lamaḥāt*, 144; *Intimations*, ¶3.140–41; Ibn Kammūna, *Sharḥ*, 3.420–25; *Points*, ¶3.55; *Oeuvres*, 1:81, 186). Even *The Paths and Havens* is uncharacteristically concise (*Oeuvres*, 1:499–500). Seemingly, then, Suhrawardī accepts the standard Avicennan picture of a new soul being emanated at conception and escaping after death to an incorporeal world where it will face the rewards or punishments for its earthly deeds. It does seem reasonably clear that he did not accept the preexistence of the soul (*Illumination*, ¶¶211–14), the accounts of the fall of the soul in the allegories notwithstanding, but with reincarnation the matter does not seem to be so simple.

The Intimations has a detailed discussion of the issue, but it is odd. It begins with a reference to the "two souls" problem—that reincarnation would imply that a body would receive two souls, one reincarnated and the other emanated—which is met by the objection that the adherent of reincarnation does not believe that a soul is emanated upon a human embryo, but instead begins with plants and works its way up to the rank of humanity, an objection dismissed on the ground that the human body is nobler and therefore worthier of receiving a soul directly. This is followed by another objection, in which arguments in favor of transmigration are stated at length, many of which presume that the soul begins in a human being but then works its way down. These arguments also include invocations of the authority of the ancients and the prophets. To these Suhrawardī eventually replies with brief and not very convincing dismissals of each argument. He ends by saying that the citations from scripture can be understood in other ways but that *The Intimations* was not the proper place for an extensive discussion. Even stranger is the discussion in *The Philosophy of Illumination* (¶¶229–36), which gives an elaborate explanation, attributed to "Buddha and the Oriental sages before him," in which human beings are the "gate of gates" through which soul enters the world and works its way down in successive deaths through various kinds of animals and plants until its sins are purged and it can escape to the incorporeal world. This theory answers the usual objections to reincarnation, including Suhrawardī's, if we assume that the world had no beginning in time, since souls move in only one direction and the soul can move through a great many animals before its liberation. Finally, he states that the arguments for and against reincarnation are weak (¶245).

The obvious explanation of this is that Suhrawardī, following his Neoplatonic forebears, believed in reincarnation but thought it wiser not to say so openly, perhaps out of fear of persecution but also possibly because he did not think that reincarnation was a doctrine that ought to be openly taught to the masses. He is quite clear that there is more to his teaching than he is willing to commit to paper, even in *The Philosophy of Illumination.* Such certainly was the opinion of some of his early interpreters (Schmidtke 1999, 243–51). Ibn Kammūna in his commentary on *The Intimations* criticizes the arguments that Suhrawardī gives against reincarnation, though he does not take a position himself (3.420–39). Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī in his commentary on *The Philosophy of Illumination* takes a nominally ambivalent position that was understood by Mullā Ṣadrā, at least, to be support for the doctrine of reincarnation (*Asfār*, 8.372–77). The strongest adherent of reincarnation was Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, particularly in his *The Divine Tree* (*Shajara*, 3:548–609), where he gives a very detailed survey of the problem.

12.11. Conclusion: From Peripatetic to Illuminationist Philosophy

The view that the major Peripatetic works—*The Intimations, The Points at Issue*, and *The Paths and Havens*—and *The Philosophy of Illumination* need to be dealt with as a whole was clearly stated by Hossein Ziai on the basis of Suhrawardī's logic, in particular the problem of definition. This chapter supports that conclusion, based on a broader (but presently and unfortunately still superficial) evaluation of the distinctive Illuminationist doctrines. In each case the pattern has proven to be that the problem is in some way set up in Peripatetic terms in *The Intimations*. Suhrawardī then states the Illuminationist position in *The Philosophy of Illumination*, criticizing Peripatetic arguments in the section on sophisms and then incorporating it into the Illuminationist ontology and cosmology in the second half of this book. The details are then worked out in detail in *The Paths and Havens.*

This interpretation of the interrelations among the works has implications for the interpretation of the system as a whole. Most important, the Peripatetic works cannot simply be ignored, for they set up the problem to which *The Philosophy of Illumination* is responding and work out the details. Moreover, there is a large overlap between the Illuminationist philosophy and the Peripatetic Avicennism to which Suhrawardī is responding. Not all Peripatetic doctrines can be dismissed as propaedeutic, and the language of light in *The Philosophy of Illumination* needs to be interpreted in terms of the standard Peripatetic language of the other works. In this sense, the early commentators on this work were correct to restate these doctrines in more standard philosophical language.

This also establishes an agenda for the interpretation of Suhrawardī's philosophy. We cannot simply continue talking about Suhrawardī's mysticism and angelology. It is necessary to consider works such as *The Philosophy of Illumination* in the light of the

Peripatetic works, works by other Illuminationists such as Ibn Kammūna—if, indeed, it is legitimate to call him an Illuminationist—and Shahrazūrī, and the philosophical works that form the context of Suhrawardī's system, notably Avicenna, his commentators, and the other philosophers roughly contemporary with Suhrawardī. In this we are fortunate to have new, well-edited texts of such key works as the logic of the *Paths and Havens*, Ibn Kammūna's commentary on *The Intimations*, his independent work *The Revealer*, and Shahrazūrī's *The Divine Tree*. It is now time to read these works and analyze them.

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CHAPTER 13

AVERROES (D. 1198), *THE DECISIVE TREATISE*

CATARINA BELO

13.1. Averroes: Life and Works

Averroes (520/1126–595/1198) was born in Cordoba, descended from a family of famous jurists and judges in al-Andalus. He pursued this family tradition in jurisprudence, having become himself judge (*qāḍī*) of Seville and subsequently judge of Cordoba, a post that his grandfather had occupied before him. Averroes was also a physician, having become personal physician to Almohad ruler Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (r. 558/1163–580/1184), as well as a philosopher.

Averroes lived initially under Almoravid rule, until the Almoravid rulers were replaced by the Almohads, which was also a North African dynasty. He studied the Islamic religious sciences, such as jurisprudence and Arabic grammar and also medicine and philosophy, including the various philosophical disciplines, namely logic, physics or the natural sciences, and metaphysics.

During his lifetime he remained close to the Almohad rulers of al-Andalus, first to ʿAbd al-Muʾmin (r. 541/1147–558/1163), who named him adviser for the construction of educational institutions in al-Andalus and North Africa, subsequently to ʿAbd al-Muʾmin's son Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf, as physician, and finally to the latter's son Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb (r. 580/1184–595/1199). He was particularly close to Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf, who had philosophical interests and commissioned some of the commentaries on Aristotle by Averroes. Later in life, Averroes was banished from the Almohad court in Marrakesh by Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb but was reinstated shortly before his death.

Averroes was professionally active primarily as a judge and a physician, but he devoted most of his free time to philosophy, in particular to the study and the commentaries on Aristotle's works. Averroes's written output is vast and wide-ranging. He wrote on medicine and jurisprudence (his work *The Jurist's Primer* is still considered a reference in this Islamic discipline), but the majority of his works are devoted to philosophy, and in them he took account of the entire philosophical tradition preceding him. This tradition included Aristotle and Plato, but also the Hellenistic commentators on Aristotle's works, such as Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius and the Islamic philosophers prior to him, primarily al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Avicenna (d. 428/1037).

Averroes's philosophical works are generally divided into three different periods. Initially, until the late 560s/1160s, he wrote treatises on logic and other philosophical disciplines, including short commentaries on Aristotle's works that resembled manuals on the various philosophical disciplines. In a subsequent period, Averroes wrote longer, middle commentaries on Aristotle's works, as well as original works on specific topics, such as the relation between philosophy and Islam, and between philosophy and theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*). The *Decisive Treatise* (whose complete title is *Kitāb Faṣl al-maqāl wa-taqrīr mā bayn al-sharīʿa wa-l-ḥikma min al-ittiṣāl, The Book of the Decisive Treatise Determining the Connection between the [Islamic] Law and Philosophy*) belongs to this intermediate period, in addition to his defense of philosophy against the attacks of Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), titled *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* (*Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*). The other important work of this period is *Uncovering the Methods of Proofs concerning the Beliefs of the [Religious] Community* (*al-Kashf ʿan manāhij al-adilla fī ʿaqāʾid al-milla*), which represents Averroes's attempt to solve and settle the major issues that had been discussed in Islamic theology. In this middle period, Averroes engages with central discussions in the medieval Islamic world concerning the role of philosophy within the traditional Islamic disciplines and the role of the philosophers in the Islamic state.

At a later period, Averroes wrote long, detailed commentaries on some of Aristotle's major works, namely *Posterior Analytics, Physics, Metaphysics, De Caelo* (*On the Heavens*), and *De Anima* (*On the Soul*). Most of these later works represent a conscious attempt to follow more closely the philosophy of Aristotle while departing from other philosophical influences present in the Islamic philosophical tradition, such as, for instance, Neoplatonism, which offered a view on the origin of the world and the status of existing things different from Aristotle's theories on these subjects.[1]

With regard to the evolution of his thought, Averroes first studied the Greek and Hellenistic philosophical tradition as a whole, and accepted also the legacy of such Islamic philosophers as Fārābī and Avicenna. In addition to Aristotelian philosophy, this legacy included Neoplatonic elements, which had entered medieval Islamic philosophy through the influential but spurious *Theologia Aristotelis*, a free translation into Arabic of selections from the last three books of Plotinus's *Enneads*, but which Fārābī and Avicenna took to be a genuine work. Based on this work, Fārābī developed a concept of emanation that was adopted by Avicenna and which Averroes accepted at the early stages of his career.

Later, after having written his works on Islamic theology and after rebutting Ghazālī's criticism of the philosophers, he became convinced that the previous Islamic philosophers had indeed introduced foreign ideas into Aristotle's philosophy, which Averroes believed to be the best description of reality. This closeness to Aristotle is already apparent in the *Decisive Treatise* and becomes more pronounced in his long commentaries, where Aristotle's thought is praised as being in effect wholly true and faultless.

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[1] Averroes revised his written works during his lifetime, and some scholars argue that he may have written some of his middle commentaries before the long commentaries. See Ivry 1995, 83.

These later works soon began to be translated into Latin and became extremely influential not only in the establishment of Aristotle's thought in European medieval universities but also in establishing Averroes as the foremost Aristotelian commentator, a status that he held until the early seventeenth century, during which Aristotle's influence in philosophical and scientific matters underwent a sharp decline.

13.2. The *Decisive Treatise*: Reception and Themes

The *Decisive Treatise* was not among the works by Averroes translated into Latin in the Middle Ages, a fact that contributed to a distorted conception of his philosophy. Medieval Latin Averroism is premised on the distinction between philosophical and religious truth, when in fact Averroes's main claim and concluding statement in the *Decisive Treatise* affirms the harmony between religion and philosophy and the fact that they share the same content.

In modern scholarship, however, this work holds pride of place among Averroes's writings. It is arguably the work that has received more attention than any other by this philosopher in modern scholarship. This is perhaps due to its uniqueness as an explicit defense of the compatibility and even harmony between philosophy and religion, a theme that was implicit in his predecessors' works and that was at the heart of medieval philosophy, not only Islamic, but also Jewish and Christian. Moreover, this is the most widely translated work by Averroes, with some of the first translations into modern languages having been undertaken in the nineteenth century.

The work, which clearly shows Averroes's skill as a jurist, is couched in a religious, rather than philosophical, language and is addressed to a religious class, rather than the smaller class of philosophers. Therefore, he uses, for instance, the Arabic *ḥikma* ("wisdom") instead of *falsafa* to mean "philosophy," and he uses other terms from the Qurʾān rather than technical philosophical terms in order to address a religious audience and to show implicitly that this religious text has philosophical import.

The *Decisive Treatise* can be divided into two main parts and themes, the first of which stipulates that the study of philosophy is obligatory for some Muslims, while the second shows in greater detail that philosophy does not go against religion, more specifically Islam, and should have an official place within the Islamic state. An overview of the dialogue is important before analyzing its main themes in greater detail.

13.3. THE OBLIGATION TO STUDY PHILOSOPHY

The first question posed by Averroes in this treatise concerns the legal status of the study of philosophy, in other words, how Islamic law views the study of philosophy. He uses legal categories to determine the status of philosophy, namely whether the study of this discipline is permitted, prohibited, or ordained. Before establishing to which of these categories the study of philosophy belongs, he defines this discipline, stating that it consists in the examination of existing things, insofar as they prove the existence of a maker or creator. This means that, on the one hand, philosophy is keen on proving God's existence—Averroes believes that the existence of a Prime Mover, that is, God, is proved by the science of physics, as held by Aristotle; on the other hand, knowing the reality around us, as studied by philosophy, leads to a better knowledge of God. Given that Islamic law urges the study of existing, created things, and God, it is clear that the study of philosophy is something positive, and recommended or ordained by the law. Philosophy proposes a rational study of existents, and Averroes finds confirmation of this approach in the Qurʾān. Using a method that draws on religious, rather than philosophical, texts (in this treatise he quotes from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*, rather than from Aristotle or other Greek philosophical texts) he quotes Qurʾānic verses urging believers to consider the universe created by God (Qurʾān 59:2 and 7:185). For Averroes, this intellectual study of creation implies the use of logic in order to fulfill such a task.

13.4. THE USE OF GREEK LOGIC

As part of his project to bring Greek philosophy into the fold of the Islamic sciences, he first introduces logic as a requirement for the study of existing things, as commanded by the Qurʾān. Since intellectual thinking means the inference from the known to the unknown, and this is the procedure used in syllogistic logic, this method (formal logic having been founded by Aristotle) should be used by those inquiring into existing things. Averroes later expands the sciences that ought to be studied, from logic to physics and metaphysics, with logic serving as the introduction to philosophical thinking, which Averroes insists must be used by anyone seeking to inquire into reality (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 2).

In addition, an important theme is introduced here, namely the distinction between different kinds of language, discourse, or reasoning. Among the valid types of reasoning, Averroes mentions the demonstrative (intellectual and syllogistic, to be used by philosophers), the dialectical (which is not based on indubitable principles), and the rhetorical (which can be based on opinion). Sophistical reasoning is not valid because it uses false premises, or premises based on false information, resulting in a false conclusion. Syllogistic reasoning consists in the use of two premises, which lead to a valid conclusion. If the form of the syllogism is valid and the information contained in it is correct, then the conclusion obtained is true. For instance, we can conclude from the premises "All human beings are mortal" and "Philosophers are human beings" that "Philosophers are mortal."

In order to buttress the significance and religious acceptability of syllogistic logic, Averroes draws a comparison with juridical reasoning, a comparison that is reinforced by the fact that the Arabic word for syllogism and (juridical) analogy is the same (*qiyās*) (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 3). Juridical analogy consists in judging a new, practical case on the basis of a previous, similar case; thus it also implies inferring the unknown (a new legal case) from what is known (a previous legal case, already decided upon). Just as legal reasoning is an important element of Islamic law, so also philosophical/ syllogistic reasoning is necessary for the more general task of knowing existing things, and because this is a more general and comprehensive kind of study, Averroes states that syllogistic reasoning is even more important than juridical reasoning.

13.5. Islamic and Non-Islamic Sciences

As for the possible objection against syllogistic reasoning to the effect that it is not an Islamic discipline because it was founded before the birth of Islam, unlike juridical reasoning, and so constitutes an innovation, Averroes argues that juridical reasoning was also not used in Islam initially and was developed and incorporated as one of the Islamic disciplines after the birth of Islam. Both juridical and philosophical reasoning were not used by Muslims in the initial stages of Islam. Moreover, Averroes argues that most Muslim scholars accept the usage of syllogistic reasoning, which confirms the view that it is compatible with Islam. This is a reference to the fact that syllogistic logic was indeed used by Muslim scholars.

From logic, Averroes proceeds to the other sciences that were discovered by the ancient Greeks. He argues for the acceptance of other sciences, such as geometry and astronomy, and mathematics in addition to logic, by claiming that in doing away with the knowledge of the Greeks one would have to found these sciences from the start. The fact that those sciences were founded by non-Muslims should not be taken into consideration in our appraisal of them. Again, Averroes uses an example in order to illustrate his point and to make a case for philosophical disciplines, stating that a sacrifice can be made using a tool that belongs to a non-Muslim, as long as the sacrifice itself is valid.

According to Averroes, these other sciences, founded by the ancient Greeks, are needed because they are also related to the science that studies existing things and thus lead us to the creator who made them. Moreover, it would not make sense, or it might even be impossible, to found these sciences anew, so it is better to build on the tradition of the ancients. Averroes holds philosophy to be the science that studies reality in general and creation itself, as pointing to the Creator, hence its centrality.

Because of the significance of these sciences, and particularly philosophy, and the fact that they are contained in the books of the ancients, it is necessary to study the books of the ancients. Since the study of existing things is obligatory, then studying the books of the ancients, where this science is contained, is also obligatory according to Islamic law. However, Averroes makes the proviso that it is obligatory for some, not all, people, namely those who are naturally intelligent and have religious justice and virtue (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 6). To prevent these people from studying the books of the ancients means to debar them from knowing God, and believing in Him. According to Averroes, there are several ways of arriving at the belief in God, namely through religion and through philosophy. In philosophy, one reaches the belief of God by contemplating creation and also by reading the books of the ancients and reflecting on them, since they refer to God in different ways. The philosophical way is reserved for those, a minority of people, who are endowed with specific characteristics, namely virtue and the right intellectual ability, since it takes a great deal of preparation in order to understand philosophy. The religious way includes a different kind of method, language, and reasoning, more specifically the theological or dialectical way, and the rhetorical way, as we will see later.

Concerning the errors and dangers that could arise from studying philosophy, Averroes explains that this problem may occur in any discipline, either on account of a deficiency in one's natural disposition or one's overwhelming passions, or because of a poor method and the lack of a suitable teacher. Nevertheless, these problems do not happen, for the most part; rather, they are accidental to the study of philosophy. He draws a comparison with the study of jurisprudence, which can also accidentally (and rarely) lead to the corruption of its practitioner. For this art, as in the case of philosophy, practical virtue is required (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 7). If philosophy or jurisprudence leads to the corruption (lack in morals) of its practitioners, they are not to blame, but rather the lack of preparation or the right disposition on the part of the practitioner or student.

13.6. The Harmony of Religion and Philosophy

After showing that the study of philosophy as a discipline is not prohibited by Islamic law, he proceeds to the main topic, which consists in showing that the content of philosophy not only is not at variance with the Islamic religion, but shares the same goal with religion, which is the belief in God and the world as His creation. Averroes acknowledges that people have different ways of believing in God; in other words, there are different kinds of reasoning or language that are used in order to lead people to the belief in God. Averroes distinguishes three kinds of methods of reasoning, with three corresponding classes of people. The first one, as we have seen, is the demonstrative method, which is the one used by the philosopher. The second is the dialectical method, used by the theologians (*mutakallimūn*), and the third is the rhetorical method, addressed to the majority of people, possibly those who have not received any formal education, that is, regular Muslims. Averroes argues that these three methods are mentioned in the Qurʾān, according to verse 16:125. Philosophy thus fulfills the commandment of Islamic law, which enjoins reflection upon God and creation. Averroes focuses first on demonstration, given that this is the method used by philosophers and the one seemingly under attack by the theologians and religious authorities.

Having already brought up the issue of the method of reasoning in demonstrative thought, namely syllogism, Averroes now discusses the content of the philosophy books of the ancients, and how they compare with the message of the Qurʾān. If something is mentioned in the scriptures, one must ascertain how it tallies with a philosophical content. He acknowledges that there may be differences in content and considers how one should proceed in this case. If something is mentioned in philosophical books, but not mentioned in the religious texts, no contradiction arises between them. If there is an agreement, no problem arises, but if such agreement is lacking, the religious text should be interpreted. This means departing from the literal meaning of a term or phrase, but following the rules of Arabic grammar in the process, which means that there has to be a resemblance, or a relation of cause and effect, for instance, between the literal meaning and the figurative meaning. There were precedents for this practice. The jurist interprets new cases in accordance with previous ones. Moreover, there was a tradition of the interpretation of the Qurʾān before Averroes, so he draws on this long tradition. However, the implication is clear: while the religious texts should be interpreted in a nonliteral way, the philosophical texts should be taken, and accepted, at face value. Figurative interpretation is like an inference, which is practiced by jurists and should be used by philosophers in reading religious texts. Averroes adds that a metaphorical reading of passages within religious texts will find literal confirmation in other passages of the same texts. Moreover, he adduces the idea of a consensus among the religious scholars of Islam to the effect that it is not necessary to read literally all passages within religious texts, in spite of a disagreement as to which passages should be interpreted and which should be taken literally. He provides examples of such disagreements with regard to the interpretation of the Qurʾān. One should thus distinguish between the apparent sense and the inner sense, and the existence of these two senses is accepted, but there is no consensus regarding how to interpret all the passages in the Qurʾān. Averroes points out that there is sometimes a contradiction between two apparent passages in religious texts, the reason for this being to alert those of the demonstrative class that one of the contradictory passages has an inner meaning.

Averroes then focuses on the question of consensus (*ijmāʿ*) regarding matters of religion in general and also, more specifically, regarding the interpretation of the Qurʾān. He remarks that such a consensus is not possible on theoretical matters, although it is possible on practical matters (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 11). The impossibility of a consensus on matters of theory stems from the stringent conditions for obtaining true consensus: we would have to know for each particular period in which a consensus has been established the number of scholars involved as well as their exact position on the subject matter at hand, and their views must come to us through an uninterrupted chain of transmission. Averroes also remarks that the distinction between an apparent and an inner sense goes back to the birth of Islam, and also that the inner sense must not be imposed on someone who lacks a formal religious education or is unable to assimilate an inner sense. Even the early scholars of Islam agreed that the inner sense should not be revealed to everyone, unlike the case in practical matters, for instance regarding questions of worship and way of life within the Islamic community, which are suited to be disclosed to everyone in the community. Moreover, the requirements for a consensus on practical matters is much simpler than the requirements for theoretical consensus. There is consensus on practical issues if the question is publicly known and no difference of opinion is recorded.

Given the lack of consensus, differences in matters of interpretation of the Qurʾān should not lead to a charge of unbelief, and here Averroes has the philosophers, in particular Fārābī and Avicenna, in mind, who were accused of unbelief by Ghazālī, although the latter had argued that one should not be charged with unbelief for not following a consensus. In particular, Ghazālī accused these philosophers of unbelief for defending three specific ideas, namely (1) the eternity of the world, (2) God's lack of knowledge of the particulars and (3) an understanding of the next life that did not include the resurrection of the body (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 12). Yet, according to Averroes, following a Qurʾānic verse, those who are conversant with science are described as having faith in God, and for Averroes these are the members of the demonstrative class that includes the science of interpretation of religious texts, especially the Qurʾān.

Here Averroes proposes what becomes a leitmotif in the *Decisive Treatise*, namely the idea that the philosophers are the ones truly qualified to be the interpreters of religious texts, because they use the most accurate methods in their search for knowledge, namely the demonstrative method. Even so, he does not seek to impose one standard interpretation of the Qurʾān, given the lack of consensus on theoretical matters, even among philosophers.

The central part of the *Decisive Treatise* is devoted to the treatment of the three positions held by philosophers that were considered heretical by Ghazālī. These receive a fuller treatment in the *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, but it is important to note Averroes's approach to these issues in this shorter work.

Averroes starts by discussing the issue of God's knowledge of particulars, stressing that God's knowledge in general, and His knowledge of particulars, is different from human knowledge, and hence the difficulty in comparing them. While God's knowledge of something is the cause of its existence, we have knowledge of things because of their existence, since we only know them when we apprehend these existing things. Thus our knowledge is generated, while God's knowledge is eternal, and so "knowledge" does not mean exactly the same in both instances. One of the proofs that God knows particulars, according to medieval Aristotelian philosophers, is the existence of true dream-visions, premonitions of things to come, which are God-sent to human beings in their sleep. These visions of particular future events, sent by God, prove that God knows particular things. Also the terms "universal" and "particular" do not mean the same when applied to God's knowledge and to ours, because God is not limited by our process of knowing, since He knows everything there is to know at once.

Averroes then proceeds to the question of the world's eternity, noting the different positions held by the ancient philosophers. He distinguishes three kinds of beings, namely, (1) particular substances, or existing things, which begin to exist in time and are material, caused, and generated; (2) an eternal, uncaused and ungenerated being, that is, God, who is the Agent and creator of the world, and finally (3) the world, which according to Averroes is both eternal (not preceded by time) and caused. A disagreement regarding the time in which the world exists concerns the past, which is conceived as being limited, according to Plato and the Islamic theologians, and as not being limited, which is the opinion of Aristotle.

According to Averroes, the difference between both views is not unbridgeable, since it is only a matter of stress regarding whether the world rather resembles created things, or the eternal being. One group emphasizes the fact that the world is generated, while the other holds that it is eternal. According to Averroes, God eternally causes the world but in this creative process there is no time delay between the existence of God and the coming to be of the world, and thus God and the world exist at the same time, although God is the cause and the world His effect (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 15). In order to show that the Qurʾān supports the notion of an eternal world, Averroes cites a verse to the effect that, before creation, God's throne was on water (Qurʾān 11:7), indicating that something other than God (the throne and the water) existed before creation. Hence, according to Averroes, religious texts do not say that there was nothing in existence other than God before creation, pointing out that theologians, in not reading this passage literally, do not address this issue.

13.7. Interpretation and Apparent and Inner Meaning

With regard to interpretation, the mere fact of attempting the task should be rewarded, especially when the judge is seeking the truth of the matter, provided that he is knowledgeable in his discipline. And philosophical judgement, according to Averroes, is even more important than juridical judgement, as we have seen.

There is no excuse for error from someone who is not knowledgeable. In addition, there should be no compromise with regard to the three main tenets that everyone is capable of accepting and is obliged to accept, namely, the existence of God, the prophetic missions, and happiness and misery (i.e., reward and punishment) in the hereafter. All modes of knowledge or methods of assent (rhetorical, dialectical, and demonstrative) lead to these three principles, so that they cannot be questioned on pain of heresy.

According to Averroes, the religious texts are divided into an apparent and an inner meaning. The apparent meaning is usually read at face value by those who use the dialectical or the rhetorical discourse, while the demonstrative meaning is the hidden meaning that is elucidated by those who practice the demonstrative method. If the same thing is known equally through the three methods, there is no need for figurative interpretation. An example would be the belief in reward and punishment in the hereafter—for one is not allowed to think of this as a mere metaphor intended to maintain the social and political order in this life and within the Islamic community. Therefore, not every part of the religious texts should be interpreted. In some cases, however, those who are conversant with demonstration are obliged to interpret figuratively the apparent text, although such interpretation is never allowed for those who are not conversant with philosophy.

Verses that should be read metaphorically by the philosophers are the ones, for instance, that depict God as being or traveling in space. Since God does not have a body, it is not appropriate for one to think of Him in relation to space; however, this is allowed for those who belong to the rhetorical class, because they use their imagination to picture God. Using one's imagination implies resorting to mental images that inevitably represent God in a corporeal, material way, and the majority of people think of God either in corporeal terms or in connection with a place (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 20). If members of the rhetorical class inquire into the verses that portray God in this way, they should be told, according to the Qurʾānic verse (3:7), that only God knows their interpretation (*taʾwīl*). According to Averroes, even the people of demonstration disagree about the exact interpretation of such verses, although they agree that an interpretation is in order. In addition to verses that are apparent and those that require a figurative interpretation, there are those concerning which, given their difficulty, there is doubt whether an interpretation is required, and if a learned Muslim commits an error regarding their interpretation, he is excused. An example provided by Averroes at this passage concerns the verses on the description of the next life, although the Ashʿarites, for instance, insist on taking them literally. In any case, the existence of the next life must be accepted by all kinds of readers of the Qurʾān, for denying it constitutes unbelief (*kufr*). If those who are not philosophers interpret these verses, they are committing unbelief, for they must take them in their apparent sense, and those of the demonstrative class who divulge the hidden meaning to others are committing unbelief, for these two actions lead to unbelief. With regard to the essential tenets of the Islamic creed (in this case, the hereafter), the fact must be accepted, and only the manner of its existence can admit of interpretation.

How can philosophers hide their interpretations from the majority of people? This is done by expounding religious interpretation only in demonstrative books, that is, those not written in a popular style and so inaccessible to the majority of people who are not trained in logic and do not understand the technical language in which such interpretations are couched. If one makes available these interpretations in popular books, the majority of people will access them and be led to unbelief, something Averroes accuses Ghazālī, albeit unintentionally, of doing. Averroes himself apologizes for writing on this subject in a shorter, not demonstrative work, and argues that this is justified only by the fact that the controversy surrounding the connection between religion and philosophy and the interpretation of religious texts was so widely known as to warrant a public discussion.

Banning demonstrative books altogether is a mistake because it deprives a minority of learned Muslims of access to knowledge and even religion.

Averroes then concentrates on the goal of religion, making a distinction between knowledge and practice. The first consists in knowledge of God and creation, and the second in the practice of actions prescribed by God in order to attain happiness in the hereafter. The practical aspect is further divided into corporal actions stipulated by jurisprudence, on the one hand, and actions of the soul on the other, such as the virtues. The first aspect is the one Averroes focuses on in the *Decisive Treatise*.

13.8. Three Ways of Assenting and Three Classes of People

In order to fulfill the goal of Islam, which is to believe in God and to follow His commandments, one must approach the religious text in the most suitable way possible according to one's intellectual abilities and training. There are three ways of reaching this goal, the demonstrative, the dialectical, and the rhetorical. The demonstrative, as we have seen, is the method proper to philosophers, and it includes not only the use of Aristotelian logic but also the study of the ancient sciences and the usage of those scientific data in reading the Qurʾān. The dialectical method and the rhetorical method are the most common ones. The dialectical method is less common than the rhetorical, which suits even someone without a formal education. The dialectical method is, according to Averroes, used by the theologians such as the Ashʿarites and the Muʿtazilites, who defend a limited kind of interpretation (*taʾwīl*) that might be suited to the majority.

How are the three classes distinguished? The rhetorical class produces no interpretation and should follow the apparent sense of the text. In turn, the dialectical class, identified primarily with the theologians who may partly use logic, produces interpretations that are not certain. Finally, the demonstrative class, that of the philosophers, produces certain interpretations of the Qurʾān and makes full use of the Greek sciences and philosophy. In classifying human beings according to these three categories, Averroes takes into account both one's innate disposition and one's intelligence as well as education.

The separation between classes is explained by Averroes through the method used in assenting to fundamental religious truths. The kind of assent is itself determined by intellectual disposition and the education one has received. The demonstrative class is set apart and should not divulge its interpretations to either the rhetorical or the dialectical class. Averroes justifies this secrecy with regard to demonstrative interpretations with the nature of interpretation, assent, and belief.

The metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of scripture implies removing the apparent sense and replacing it with the hidden, metaphorical sense. Given that the metaphorical sense is less material and more spiritual, to do away with anything that appeals to the imagination or the use of images means that the person who cannot understand the more spiritual sense is left with nothing, since the metaphorical reading removes the literal sense. Therefore, if people who do not belong to the demonstrative class ask about the meaning of a verse where the apparent sense may not be immediately understood, they should be told that its meaning is only known to God, as we have seen. The same should be said to them regarding any aspect that is difficult to understand by those not trained in philosophy.

Leading others to unbelief is itself unbelief, hence the imperative of not divulging metaphorical interpretations. In an example provided by Averroes, to divulge these interpretations to the unlearned would be analogous to the case of a doctor trying to teach medicine to his patients as a condition for their taking the medicine, dismissing the usual, simplified explanations provided by doctors. The result, according to Averroes, is that the patient, not understanding the art of medicine, would not take the required medicine. And while the doctor takes care of the soul, the lawgiver, as implied by Averroes, takes care of the souls of people (Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, 28).

Averroes goes on to explain the emergence of factions within Islam, which he attributes to the spread of corrupt interpretations of the Qurʾān. He specifically blames the Muʿtazilites and the Ashʿarites for this problem. Not only did they provide corrupt interpretations, they also divulged them. The interpretations of the Ashʿarites he finds particularly pernicious because they are obscure and they imply the denial of the rules of causality and even rationality, thus falling short of the demonstrative method. They also went about excommunicating others for not accepting their views.

The solution to the problem, according to Averroes, is to follow strictly the Qurʾān, which advocates these three methods. He further claims that in the early days of Islam there were few interpretations, and even these were not divulged. One should avoid interpreting the Qurʾān figuratively as much as possible, unless such interpretations are found suitable by the philosophers. Averroes then invokes the famous principle of the inimitability of the Qurʾān as based on three principles, namely that (1) it is more persuasive than any other text, (2) it is clear in itself, not requiring an interpretation for most people, except, in some cases, for philosophers, and (3) it points to which of its verses should be interpreted and how they should be interpreted. Finally, Averroes advocates a middle way for the multitude to know God, presumably through explanations provided by philosophers.

13.9. Historical Context and the Shared Goal of Philosophy and Religion

The *Decisive Treatise* is short text that defends philosophy in the face of criticism that came from several quarters. The most obvious, and best documented, attack was the one leveled by Ghazālī against the philosophers. Having studied philosophy for several years and having analyzed the philosophers' theories (represented primarily by Avicenna, who had composed several philosophical works and a magnum opus, which was a sum of philosophy, and which was to impact the Islamic world for centuries to come), he considered most of the philosophers' theories regarding God and His attributes (based on Neoplatonic philosophy) unorthodox. Three of them he considered unbelief, such as the philosophers' belief in an eternal world. In Ghazālī's view, this theory was incompatible with the notion of an omnipotent and creator God. Ghazālī was influential in the Islamic East and West, and his views shaped the religious outlook of the Almohad dynasty and its ideological founder, Ibn Tūmart (d. ca. 524/1130). Averroes understood the seriousness of the threat posed by Ghazālī's accusations and sought to defend the philosophers.

In this work, he defends the freedom, indeed the necessity, for some to study philosophy (primarily the ancient philosophers and among them Aristotle). The threat to the practice of philosophy was not merely theoretical. Averroes had to undergo a trial for presumably mentioning Venus as a goddess in one of his works, and was banished from the royal court for a couple of years before being reinstated, shortly before his death.

The *Decisive Treatise* is clear about the need to hide from the majority of people the interpretations made by the philosophers of religious texts since the majority would not understand them, and would be confused about the meaning of scripture, and would thus be led astray. Concurrently, and in order to ensure that philosophy would have a religious and political role within the Islamic community, Averroes believes that the philosophers should be the ones deciding on the meaning of scripture and how to present it to the majority of people.

It is worth bearing in mind that the status of philosophy in al-Andalus was not firmly established, unlike the status of the older Islamic sciences—in fact philosophy was under threat. Philosophy drew its main inspiration from Greek, thus pagan, authors, a factor that counted against it.

An illustration of the isolated status of philosophy—in spite of a rich and long-standing tradition of philosophy in al-Andalus attested to by the many illustrious philosophers produced by al-Andalus—is Ibn Bājja's (d. 533/1139) notion, expounded in his *Rule of the Solitary*, that philosophers are strangers in the political community and should lead a solitary life. Philosophy in al-Andalus was dependent on state support, as illustrated by the case of Averroes, whose fortunes depended on the personal philosophical interests of the emirs under whom he lived. The status of philosophy was precarious, and the *Decisive Treatise* purports to defend philosophy within an Islamic context.

Averroes speaks to an Islamic audience, and the entire treatise is couched in a religious, Islamic language, which indicates that while the book was not intended for a general audience, in other words, for the rhetorical class, it appears to address not philosophers, but Islamic leaders and religious scholars, who were versed in the main Islamic disciplines, though not necessarily practitioners of theology. Theology was not a central Islamic discipline, and Averroes berates the dialectical method and the theologians' interpretation of religious texts in this work. Clearly, Averroes was seeking by means of this writing to create a prominent place for philosophy within the Islamic community and particularly in twelfth-century al-Andalus. Given Averroes's disgrace in the later period of his life, it appears that his work did not achieve its desired goal. Political and military factors, and the fact that the Islamic communities in the Iberian peninsula were being threatened by advancing Christian armies during the Reconquista, may have contributed to the decline of philosophy, since this discipline involved a dialogue with a foreign and un-Islamic culture.

13.10. Harmonizing Philosophy and Religion

Both the language and the content of the *Decisive Treatise* aim to show that philosophy is a necessary element within Islamic culture and that it is an Islamic discipline and deserves its rightful place within Islam. Averroes is well aware of the criticisms leveled at philosophy, coming not just from the theologians, as illustrated by the case of Ghazālī, but also from other quarters within Islamic society. Therefore, Averroes claims that any theory that does not accord with Islam should be rejected. However, when it comes to the practical application of the rules of figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*), the philosophical text should be read and accepted as it is, and the religious text should be interpreted if its apparent, literal meaning does not accord with the philosophical message. Later, in his long commentaries, Averroes praises Aristotle as the founder of the three main philosophical disciplines, logic, physics, and metaphysics, and states that his works are practically free from error.

The main tenets of Islam that according to him should not be compromised are three, namely, the existence of God, the truth of prophethood, and the afterlife. With regard to the first and most fundamental principle, Averroes does not impose a particular understanding of God, but he explains that the philosophers conceive of God in a purely spiritual way, while the vast majority of people are unable to think of God in a purely abstract way.

With regard to prophethood, he clearly believes that the prophets of Islam should be recognized as such, in particular Muḥammad, the seal of the prophets. The proof of prophethood, as stated in another work, his theological treatise *Uncovering the Methods*, lies not in the performance of miracles, which could also come from magicians, but from the miraculous character of the Qurʾān, which he argues could not have a human origin and whose divine character is further highlighted by the fact that it promotes morality. In the *Decisive Treatise*, too, Averroes argues for the inimitability of the Qurʾān, namely because it addresses all kinds of people and has a universal message that brings everyone closer to God according to each one's intellectual abilities. He writes on the inimitability and miraculousness of the Qurʾān in different works, and in the *Decisive Treatise* he considers the Qurʾān inimitable, specifically with regard to the way in which it points to its own correct interpretation and addresses the three classes of assent.

With regard to the afterlife, Averroes insists on the acceptance of the existence of life after death for human beings, but he also argues that the exact description of the afterlife cannot be known; hence one is obliged to state that the afterlife exists, though not obliged to say the exact manner of its existence. In the *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, he does not favor a particular interpretation of the Qurʾān with regard to the state of the afterlife, but he favors the more detailed or material descriptions contained in the Islamic tradition than the spiritualized Christian understanding of paradise, because he holds that it promotes morality in this life more strongly and convincingly.

However, he does stress that these three tenets are true in themselves and should not be seen as metaphors that one ought to adopt in order to promote a peaceful political state. In other words, religion and specifically these tenets are true in themselves and as revealed by God and not a mere human stratagem concocted by political and religious leaders in order to keep the majority of the population under control.

Another major theme in this work, and the pivotal aspect allowing for the harmonization of philosophy and religion, is that of the interpretation of religious texts, primarily the Qurʾān. This is not a new topic, for the interpretation of the Qurʾān had been discussed since the early period of Islam. Averroes stresses that this is a sensitive point, to such an extent that figurative interpretations of the Qurʾān should not be presented to the multitude, though he makes some exceptions to this rule in *Uncovering the Methods*. Interpretation should follow certain rules, in particular the rules of Arabic grammar for such cases. The metaphorical meaning has to have a certain relation to the literal meaning, as stipulated by the rules of Arabic language. It is also worth noticing that the philosophical text, which Averroes increasingly identifies with Aristotle's works, is not to be interpreted, but should be taken literally. This is because, as we will see, philosophical discourse and texts follow the demonstrative method, expounded in Aristotle's *Second* (or *Posterior*) *Analytics*. According to Aristotle, and Averroes in his commentaries on this work, demonstrative language is universal, eternally true, and does not concern particulars, either particular substances or events. It should be unambiguous and clear and devoid of any metaphors or words that have a double meaning. The demonstrative method makes no reference to material things in their particularity but concerns general rules and laws, such as the laws of nature, or the rules of mathematics and logic. Its conclusions are eternally true and unchanging. Demonstration cannot contain any uncertainty or opinions. By identifying philosophical (which meant also scientific) language and the demonstrative method, Averroes ensures that philosophical discourse cannot be interpreted or challenged. Although in the *Decisive Treatise* he argues that philosophers may differ in their views and judgements and that this is excusable, later in his philosophical career, one major philosopher stands out, namely Aristotle.

In knowing the demonstrative method, the philosophers also know the dialectical and the rhetorical method and are thus able not only to communicate with the other classes but also to present the religious text in a suitable way, in order to preserve belief in God with regard to matters of theory. In theoretical matters, the philosophers would thus replace the theologians, whose speculations on the meaning and interpretation of the Qurʾān are mostly misguided.

Other than following the rules of Arabic grammar and style, interpretation means essentially to lift the literal meaning and to introduce the metaphorical meaning, which has to have a clear relation to the apparent meaning. This process also entails, as is clear from the *Decisive Treatise*, eliminating any anthropomorphisms from the religious texts, since these involve a material aspect and thus are not within the framework of the demonstrative method. Because the majority of people cannot think in purely abstract terms about God, these philosophical interpretations are not suited to them. They should follow the literal meaning of the religious texts.

Averroes stresses the fact that the Qurʾān contains a message that suits everyone. Although it is couched mainly in a language directed to the multitude, it is also suited to philosophers, those who know how to harmonize its message with that of philosophy. Averroes provides specific examples of such philosophical interpretations, indicating that they are possible and plausible.

13.11. The Three Classes of Assent

Another major theme is the distinction made by Averroes between the different classes of assent. People are divided into three classes according to the way in which they believe in the Qurʾān and in the three tenets that according to Averroes are nonnegotiable, and especially the belief in God and His existence (in addition to the existence of an afterlife, and the belief in the prophetic missions). Although people conceive of God in different ways, it is important that everyone has a belief in God according to his or her mental abilities. Averroes explains the different mental abilities, which imply a greater or lesser ability to think in an abstract and universal way. The majority of people do not have this ability in connection with God, and they tend to think in a material way, which means through images. These people represent the rhetorical class because they use the rhetorical way of assent. The rhetorical method, as explained by Aristotle in his work on rhetoric and by Averroes in his commentaries on this work, includes the employment of images and metaphors, unlike the demonstrative or scientific method. The rules of logic are relaxed (one of the premises can be omitted), and this kind of language, which covers particular cases and situations, appeals to the emotions and feelings of the recipient.

Most of the language of the Qurʾān is couched in rhetorical language because the majority of people use this kind of assent. The rhetorical method uses the richness of the language in order to bring people to assent in God, and as such is not a neutral language like the one used in the demonstrative method, which is purely rational and universal. The main goal of rhetoric is to persuade, and the various figures of speech are called upon to produce this effect within the rhetorical method.

Although the demonstrative method, which requires the study of philosophy, is much less used, it is important to defend it, because some people, those with a philosophical inclination, would not be persuaded by the rhetorical method, just as people belonging to the rhetorical class would not be able to assent to the tenets of religion through the demonstrative method. Averroes's claim is that the best people (i.e., the philosophers) are left out if they are deprived of the study of philosophy, which describes creation and the creator.

In between the demonstrative and the rhetorical method we find the dialectical method (examined extensively in Aristotle's *Topics* and Averroes's commentaries on this work), which uses logic but whose premises may not be certain and may even contain opinions, rather than the indisputable premises and knowledge to be found in demonstrative discourse. While for Aristotle, the dialectical method—based on Plato's method of dialogue with tentative questions and answers with the aim of reaching the truth—is a preparation for the study of philosophy and in particular a preparation for the study of the demonstrative method, Averroes identifies it with the theologians (*mutakallimūn*). Given that these have proposed erroneous interpretations of the Qurʾān and have divulged those interpretations (not least Ghazālī), Averroes proposes that philosophers keep their interpretations to themselves and leave the apparent sense of the text to the majority of people. Therefore is it better to have only two classes, the demonstrative and the rhetorical, and to make philosophy not only a required subject for some Muslims, but also have the philosophers as the leading interpreters of the religious texts.

13.12. CONCLUSION

This work is a manifest in defense of Islamic philosophy in a Sunnī context, and possibly the most explicit text to propose such a goal in the medieval period. Averroes avails himself of his training as a jurist and a philosopher in order to seek to establish philosophy as a legitimate Islamic science. However, the fact that philosophy remains accessible only to a minority of Muslims and that its theories must be hidden from the majority, coupled with the previous charges leveled against it by theologians and other religious scholars, made Averroes's task exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, this remains a compelling and powerful document on the importance of studying and practicing philosophy in the face of an increasingly hostile context.

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CHAPTER 14

AL-RĀZĪ'S (D. 1210) COMMENTARY ON AVICENNA'S *POINTERS*

The Confluence of Exegesis and Aporetics

AYMAN SHIHADEH

The terms of the prevalent interpretation of al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* (*Commentary on* [Avicenna's] *Pointers*) have largely been dictated by an entrenched grand narrative on the broader history of medieval Islamic thought, within which the *Sharḥ* is read, often explicitly, in the shadow of other "classics." The book tends to be juxtaposed with al-Ghazālī's criticism of Avicennan philosophy in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, and contrasted to al-Ṭūsī's defense of Avicennan philosophy in *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt*, the supercommentary in which he responds to al-Rāzī.[1] It is assumed that al-Rāzī's work was effectively a sequel to the *Tahāfut*, and as such a second instalment in a sustained attack on Avicenna's teachings in defense of Ashʿarī orthodoxy, and that thanks in large part to al-Ṭūsī's efforts, his predecessors' attack did not result in a complete rout of philosophy, which consequently managed to survive in some form or other. This assumption is self-fulfilling, hence the often selective coverage of available studies (with notable recent exceptions), reinforcing the portrayal of al-Rāzī merely as the Ashʿarī critic of Avicenna. The flaws and dangers of this account are gradually becoming apparent. For starters, it is a decidedly reductionist straitjacket, which offers a distorted, at best partial, perspective.[2]

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[1] For instance: "Al-Rāzī, writing as an Ashʿarite theologian, devoted a large portion of his commentary to criticising Ibn Sīnā's philosophical doctrines in much the same manner as al-Ghazālī . . . had done previously in his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. Al-Ṭūsī, writing as a philosopher some years after al-Rāzī, felt obliged to devote much of his own commentary to answering al-Rāzī's criticisms and to defending the doctrines of Ibn Sīnā" (Heer 1992, 111). Similar views are echoed in more recent studies. However, see now Wisnovsky 2013, which came to my attention after writing the present chapter. Wisnovsky's paper and this chapter intersect at some points, but offer significantly different perspectives on the subject.

[2] Although this grand narrative is partly a modern construct, portraying al-Rāzī simply as a refuter has medieval roots. For instance, the overworn designation "the chief doubter" (*imām al-mushakkikīn*), popularized by Hossein Nasr, originates in Safavid polemics.

So, avowedly, I have an ax to grind. In what follows, I propose a somewhat iconoclastic reading, one that steers clear of the grand narrative and interprets the *Sharḥ*, not in the light (and shadow) of any traditional canon of classics, but in the proper, chronologically narrower intellectual context of the text's genesis, and by its own yardstick. For this purpose, our attention must shift toward some less-known "local" sources originating in al-Rāzī's milieu, which have recently come to light and are of the essence for a sound understanding of the text. A further desideratum is both to identify the generic genealogy of the *Sharḥ* and to situate the work in its author's own broader intellectual project.

The present study will follow a simple procedure, which is the gradual narrowing down of scope. We shall begin by contextualizing the *Sharḥ* against the background just delineated, and then focus on the book's overall organization, then on individual sectional commentaries, before turning to two specific discussions. These are not only of philosophical interest in themselves, but should also serve to exemplify our broader characterization of the work. The first discussion centers on Avicenna's proof of prime matter and theory of corporeal form, and the second on aspects of his theory of efficient causality.

14.1. Context I: Al-Rāzī's Career and Milieu

Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rāzī was born in 544/1149 to Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Makkī (d. 559/1163–64), a prominent Ashʿarī and Shāfiʿī in Rayy, who became Fakhr al-Dīn's first teacher in theology and law (Shihadeh 2013b). A student of Abū l-Qāsim al-Anṣārī (d. 504/1110), who in turn studied with al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), al-Makkī represents the later, Juwaynian phase of classical Ashʿarī theology, as the recently discovered part of his major summa *Nihāyat al-marām* reveals. This was the theological tradition into which the young Fakhr al-Dīn was initiated, a point confirmed, for instance, by the style of theology encountered in the lengthy summa probably titled *Uṣūl al-dīn*, which I believe to be the earliest extant theological work written by him (Shihadeh 2016b), and by a report that he closely studied al-Juwaynī's *Shāmil* at a young age (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 4, 249). After his father's death, al-Rāzī went on to study with other teachers, most notably Majd al-Dīn al-Jīlī, a minor philosopher about whom we know extremely little. In this second phase of his education, he studied philosophy, particularly the works of Avicenna and Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. ca. 560/1165), initially with teachers, but later independently. Having completed his studies, he traveled east to Khurāsān and Transoxania primarily to seek patronage and probably to acquaint himself with their relatively vibrant philosophical scene, and around 585/1189–595/1199 he eventually succeeded in winning major patronage from both the Khwārazm-shāhs and the Ghūrids. He died in Herat in 606/1210 (for his biography, see Griffel 2007; Altaş 2013a).

Aside from the classical Ashʿarism he received through his father, two other intellectual currents featured in al-Rāzī's milieu and started to affect him early on in his career (on this dialectical milieu, see Shihadeh 2005; 2016a, 7–11; on his engagement with "local" sources, i.e., sources that have geographically- and chronologically-proximate origins, see Shihadeh 2014a, 6–7). The first is traditional, mainstream Avicennism, whose chief protagonist in the mid-sixth/twelfth century is ʿUmar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī. The second is a counter-Avicennan current that emerged in response to the increasing spread of Avicennan philosophy within religious scholarly circles. The principal representatives of this current are Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī of Samarqand and Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī of Bukhara, who both died in the late sixth/twelfth century (Shihadeh 2005, 2013a, 2016a). Taking their cue chiefly from criticisms of Avicennan philosophy in al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Tahāfut* and Abū l-Barakāt's *Muʿtabar*, these two colleagues represent a crucial element in the dialectic that culminated in al-Rāzī's neo-Ashʿarī philosophical theology, and in this respect it is helpful to think of them as proto-neo-Ashʿarīs. An ultra-Ghazālian, Ibn Ghaylān takes a more strident line and declares the raison d'être of his career very much to be the refutation of Avicennan philosophy in defense of orthodox theology, a stance represented by his apologia for the doctrine of creation ex nihilo, titled *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*. Al-Masʿūdī has a more philosophically-engaged approach to Avicenna, epitomized by his aporetic commentary, which targets specific discussions in the *Ishārāt*. We shall return to both individuals a little later. Traditional Avicennists in turn wrote dedicated responses to counter-Avicennists, particularly to Abū l-Barakāt (Shihadeh 2016a, 10–11).

Al-Rāzī becomes interested in philosophy during his early study of *kalām* (*Iʿtiqādāt*, 146). Signs of closer engagement with philosophy (much closer, that is, than we find in classical Ashʿarism) are already evident in two early *kalām* works—namely, the *Ishāra*, which is a short compendium completed before 576/1181 (the date of MS Istanbul, Köprülü, 519), probably shortly before 570/1175, and *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, which is an extensive summa written probably soon after 570/1175, almost certainly by 575/1180.

As al-Rāzī's engagement in philosophy matures and deepens, he begins to write dedicated "philosophical works" (*kutub falsafiyya*, or *ḥikmiyya*), the most important in this period being the following four. The earliest is a response, *Jawābāt*, to al-Masʿūdī's commentary on the *Ishārāt*, more on which shortly. This was followed by *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, a sizable summa dating to circa 575/1180, which exhibits close familiarity with the works of Avicenna and Abū l-Barakāt. Then followed the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, which was completed in 579/1183–84 and based closely on the *Mabāḥith*. By this stage, al-Rāzī felt confident enough to write his first full commentary on Avicenna's *Ishārāt*, which was most probably completed soon after 580/1185, shortly after the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, the most frequently cited of his own works in the *Sharḥ*. He tells us that the *Sharḥ* was being taught in Samarqand when he arrived there not long after 582/1186 (*Munāẓarāt*, 7, 32, 60).

In the last stage of his career, al-Rāzī attempts to develop a synthesis of *kalām* and philosophy, as he starts to write books that, with respect to their organization and content, can best be described as works of philosophical theology. The most influential is the aptly titled *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-mutaʾakhkhirīn mina l-ḥukamāʾ wa-l-mutakallimīn* (*Compendium of the Thoughts of Ancient and Recent Philosophers and Theologians*). The most extensive is the unfinished multivolume *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, which was written between 603/1206 and 605/1209. In the same late period, al-Rāzī also wrote his commentary on Avicenna's *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, which achieved modest circulation compared to his commentary on the *Ishārāt*.

14.2. CONTEXT II: AL-RĀZĪ'S DIALECTICAL METHOD

In his philosophical works, al-Rāzī develops a distinctive dialectical method of enquiry, characterized by two salient features. These are conveniently highlighted in the prefaces to three works dating to the decade or so preceding the *Sharḥ*—namely the *Nihāya, Mabāḥith*, and *Mulakhkhaṣ*—and they can be corroborated by ample further evidence, which we lack the space to discuss here.

The first feature is al-Rāzī's methodical opposition to philosophical and theological dogmatism and partisanship (which should not be taken to imply, naively, that he himself was an impartial thinker). This stance is advocated in the preface to the *Mabāḥith* (1, 3–4), where al-Rāzī denounces two opposing parties (*farīqān*). He admonishes traditional Avicennists for their blind following (*taqlīd*) of intellectual authority to the extent that they prohibit any departure, no matter how minor, from the received philosophical tradition. He then turns to career critics of the philosophers, who think themselves competent to expose Avicenna's errors, but "only succeed in exposing their abundant stupidity." Al-Rāzī's antipathy to the latter movement is at its most vivid in his account of debates in which he engaged with al-Masʿūdī and Ibn Ghaylān, whom he characterizes as being involved in mere disputation (*jadal*) as opposed to methodical rational enquiry in search of knowledge (*baḥth*) (Shihadeh 2005; 2016a, 31–33).

The second feature is what al-Rāzī terms systematic gleaning (*taḥṣīl*) and critical investigation (*taḥqīq*). Al-Rāzī advocates a third position, which commits to both understanding and critiquing earlier systems, above all Avicenna's, and therefore steers clear of both the traditional Avicennists' uncritical imitation and the counter-Avicennists' fixation on refutation. The criticism that in his philosophical works he directs at earlier philosophical sources is overall not refutative or apologetic, but methodical.[3] He summarizes this method in the following passage (*Mabāḥith*, 1, 3), where he writes that his efforts have been directed at

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[3] Al-Rāzī's later statement (*Iʿtiqādāt*, 91–92), that in these and other works he "included responses (*radd*) to" the philosophers, should not be taken at face value, as it is motivated by a defense against accusations that he had abandoned the Sunnī creed (*Iʿtiqādāt*, 92–93). For a discussion, see Shihadeh 2005, 163 ff.

> gleaning (*taḥṣīl*) what we have found in the books of our predecessors . . ., in such a way that we select the pith (*lubāb*) from each topic, avoiding excessive prolixity and concision . . ., and opting instead to provide lucid discussions. Our procedure is to separate problems from one another, then either confirm or disconfirm each, then discuss problematic objections and difficult counterarguments, and, if we are able, provide satisfactory solutions and conclusive answers.

Further details are given in the preface to his theological *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl* (1, 99–100), where he highlights three characteristics that distinguish his method from other methods of enquiry.[4] The first is

> the painstaking investigation (*istiqṣāʾ*) of questions and answers, and the in-depth probing (*taʿammuq*) of the oceans of problems in such a way that the proponent of each thought-system (*madhhab*) may find this book of mine more beneficial than books written by proponents of that very thought-system. For I will provide from each discussion its best part (*zubda*). . . . If I do not find any worthwhile discussion in the sources of the proponents of that thought-system to support their views, I will myself come up with the best defense possible to affirm these views.

The second characteristic is that he only relies on arguments that provide "real knowledge and complete certainty," rather than ad hominem (*ex concessis*) arguments (*ilzām*), "which are only intended to refute and defeat" an opponent. The third is

> our novel procedure (*tartīb*) and well-organized process of compilation (*talfīq*), which demands whoever commits himself to it to consider all possible objections and counterarguments, while avoiding pointless interpolation and undue prolixity.

In the preface to the *Mulakhkhaṣ* (3–4), he describes his method as follows:

> This book of ours contains the précis (*mulakhkhaṣ*) of the investigations of [our] predecessors and gleanings (*muḥaṣṣal*) of their views, with precious additions that we have ourselves contributed, which are sometimes more significant and greater than their [views], and at other times of equal significance and weightiness to theirs. [We] investigate them all according to the standards of sound research (*baḥth*) and proper reflection (*naẓar*). If in any discussion, we find [one view] more compelling (*rujḥān*), and if the glory of truth shines from the horizon of demonstration (*burhān*), we shall choose and adopt it. However, if both sides of the scales are equal (*takāfaʾat al-kaffatān*), neither prevailing over the other, and if the mind's reflection

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[4] In the preface to the *Nihāya*, he also declares his objective to be the defense of Sunnī orthodoxy. However, this objective does not motivate his later, philosophical works, at least not explicitly.

> retreats empty-handed, we shall assign [the problem] to the limbo of [unresolved] dilemmas (*taraknā-hu fī ḥayyiz al-taʿāruḍ asīran*).

These passages delineate specific procedures that al-Rāzī considers to constitute sound research (*baḥth*). Two main procedures are immediately identifiable.

The first involves "gleaning" (*taḥṣīl*) the "pith," or "best part," of earlier sources and ideas, that is, distilling from each thought-system doctrines and arguments that are more or less compelling and worthy of investigation, leaving aside the "husk" (*qishr*). It is little wonder that al-Rāzī titles one book *Gleanings* (*Muḥaṣṣal*; see the end of section 14.1 above) and another *The Pith of the Pointers* (*Lubāb al-Ishārāt*), as it provides a précis of Avicennan philosophy. This gleaning, or review, process involves reformulating these views and arguments more succinctly than in their original sources; hence al-Rāzī's frequent emphasis on avoiding excessive prolixity in the process. Once a group of cognate doctrines are sifted from different thought-systems, they are then considered alongside each other within a dialectical framework that al-Rāzī constructs in the form of a philosophical or theological problem, which is often defined through a process of logical disjunction (*qisma*). Each view is then slotted in its appropriate division, such that all cognate views are presented as competing theses: "X is Y_1," "X is Y_2," . . ., " 'X is Y_n."

The second procedure is what, to my mind, al-Rāzī intends by the expression "critical investigation" (*taḥqīq*), and also by "painstaking investigation" (*istiqṣāʾ*) and "in-depth probing" (*taʿammuq, taghalghul*). This involves the comprehensive criticism of all these theses by systematically assessing all *possible* arguments for and against each, including arguments actually advanced by their proponents, counterarguments advanced by their opponents, and further, sometimes superior, arguments and counterarguments thought up by al-Rāzī himself (as indeed we shall see him do in sections 14.6 and 14.7 below). The goal of this critical investigation, at least in principle, is not to refute, but to arrive at knowledge through a robust process of systematic elimination and corroboration. According to al-Rāzī, to ascertain the proposition "X is Y_1," it is insufficient only to provide some positive proof for it; for one must also address all possible counterarguments, and consider and systematically eliminate all alternative propositions, "X is Y_2," "X is Y_3," . . ., "X is Y_n." "Complete certainty," he writes, "is achieved only after all objections (*shukūk*) and counterarguments are taken into consideration and solved (*ḥall*)" (*Nihāya*, 1, 203).

Should the process be completed successfully, "X is Y_1" will be affirmed. However, as he indicates in the above passage from the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, al-Rāzī sometimes admits that an investigation has yielded inconclusive results, and that judgement must accordingly be suspended (*tawaqquf*), since two or more alternative propositions appear to be supported by compelling proofs. In his much later work, the *Maṭālib*, he admits that in metaphysics, it is rarely achievable to prove one proposition and eliminate all other contradictory propositions; yet suspension of judgement may be averted if we are able to establish that the proofs for one proposition are more compelling (*awlā, akhlaq*) than those of contradictory propositions, in which case we may affirm the former proposition, not as an apodictic certainty, but as a probable belief. This stance is a case of mild skepticism, since al-Rāzī expresses anguish at the realization that certainty is often beyond reach (Shihadeh 2006, 181 ff.).

14.3. Generic Genealogy: Exegetical Commentary and Aporetic Commentary

In a recent study, I proposed that we should recognize what I have termed exegetical commentary and aporetic commentary as two distinct genres that are well attested in the classical and middle periods of Islamic thought (Shihadeh 2016a, 44–49). Here I will briefly overview each in turn, and will then argue that the key to understanding al-Rāzī's project of penning his full commentary on the *Ishārāt* is to read it as a deliberate confluence of the two genres, which is driven by his method of investigation, just outlined.

1. *Aporetic commentary*. This genre, to my knowledge, is confined to philosophy and the sciences, the best-known examples being Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's (d. 313/925) *al-Shukūk ʿalā kalām fāḍil al-aṭibbāʾ Jālīnūs fī l-kutub allatī nusibat ilayhi* (*Problems Raised concerning Views of Galen, the Most Eminent of Physicians, in the Books Attributed to Him*) and Ibn al-Haytham's (d. ca. 430/1039) aporias on Ptolemy, *al-Shukūk ʿalā Baṭlamyūs*. To these two we must now add Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī's recently published commentary on Avicenna's *Ishārāt*. Typically, texts of this genre target one or more works of an earlier individual, who is credited with expounding a major, paradigm-setting system within a discipline and hence holds a preeminent position of authority and influence. An aporetic commentary is normally written by an insider to the discipline, or at least by someone who presents himself as such: Abū Bakr al-Rāzī is a physician, Ibn al-Haytham an astronomer, and al-Masʿūdī a philosopher. As an insider to the discipline, the commentator will be unsatisfied with elements, major or minor, of the authoritative target system, and will critique these elements by raising "aporias" (*shukūk*), or "objections" (*iʿtirāḍāt*), on selected passages in the target text or texts. Abū Bakr al-Rāzī delineates two ways in which an aporia can be addressed: one can either offer a solution (*ḥall*) to the problem, which may require developing aspects of the target system, or abandon the view that the aporia queries, which presumably makes room for alternative views.

The most important aporetic commentary written on an Avicennan work in the sixth/twelfth century is al-Masʿūdī's *al-Mabāḥith wa-l-shukūk ʿalā l-Ishārāt* (*Investigations and Objections on the Pointers*), which dates to the third quarter of the century (see Shihadeh 2016a for a study and edition). Consisting of fifteen sections of varying length, which raise objections on selected passages on metaphysics and natural philosophy in Avicenna's text, the commentary finds inspiration in both Abū l-Barakāt's *Muʿtabar* and al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*. Although al-Masʿūdī states in his preface that the aporias he raises require "solutions," they mostly in fact call for significant, sometimes radical, departures from Avicenna's philosophy along lines that tally with central theological tenets, such as the creation of the world ex nihilo and God's knowledge of particulars. Al-Masʿūdī's aporetic commentary belongs to the sixth/twelfth-century counter-Avicennan current described earlier; but while he chose to critique some of Avicenna's teachings from the perspective of an insider to the discipline of philosophy, others explicitly positioned themselves outside it, such as the aforementioned Ibn Ghaylān (on whom, see Shihadeh 2013a). His stridently critical book *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* (*The Creation of the World in Time*), written in response to Avicenna's defense of eternalism in *al-Ḥukūma fī ḥujaj al-muthbitīn li-l-māḍī mabdaʾan zamāniyyan* (*The Appraisal of the Arguments of Those Who Hold That the World Has a Beginning in Time*), is a refutation (*radd*), rather than an aporetic commentary.

2. *Exegetical commentary*. Often marked by the label *sharḥ* or *tafsīr*, texts of this more ubiquitous genre offer, above all else, exposition of the text commented on, either fully or in part, though they may carry out other tasks in addition. The expository function of an exegetical commentary may include the development and reformulation of the contents of the main text, sometimes in response to criticisms to which they have been subjected, or are susceptible. Under the major genre of exegetical commentaries, I would therefore class the small subgenre of counter-aporetic texts, which are supercommentaries, sometimes titled "solutions" (*ḥall*) or "response" (*jawāb*), that respond to aporetic commentaries in a process that involves, first and foremost, the exposition of the contents of the main text in ways that resolve the aporias.

Before al-Rāzī wrote his commentary on the *Ishārāt*, the Avicennan text of choice for exegetical commentaries in the sixth/twelfth century was the medium-sized *Najāt* (*The Salvation*) (Shihadeh 2016a, 47–49). At least two full commentaries were written on this book: (1) a three-volume commentary, now lost, by Ẓahīr al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1170); and (2) a commentary by a certain Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Isfarāʾīnī, which is extant. Another Avicennan text that received a considerable amount of attention in this period was *al-Khuṭba al-gharrāʾ* (*The Exalted Homily*), a general text on philosophical theology of approximately five hundred words, on which al-Masʿūdī wrote an expository commentary (Shihadeh 2016a, 20–22). In the preface, he informs us that in this commentary he will eschew prejudice and partisanship (*al-mayl wa-l-ʿaṣabiyya*) and instead explain Avicenna's text "in keeping with the methods, principles, core foundations, and demonstrations" of his philosophy (*Sharḥ al-Khuṭba*, fol. 2a–b). Al-Rāzī had access to this commentary. As to the *Ishārāt*, al-Bayhaqī reportedly penned a commentary, most probably expository, on the text; but we have no information on whether it was full or partial, and it appears to have had hardly any impact on the later commentarial tradition.

The earliest extant, and historically significant, exegetical commentary on the *Ishārāt* is al-Rāzī's counter-aporetic work titled *Jawābāt al-masāʾil al-bukhāriyya* (*Response to the [Philosophical] Problems from Bukhara*), in which he responds to al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* (for a discussion and edition see Shihadeh 2014a). Dating to 570/1175–575/1180, the *Jawābāt* is al-Rāzī's earliest known philosophical work. He criticizes al-Masʿūdī's commentary in two main ways, first by underscoring aspects of his method, which betray an underlying bias motivating the commentary. For instance, in one discussion al-Rāzī criticizes him for not consulting other Avicennan texts to illuminate some of the contents of the *Ishārāt*. In another, he disapproves of al-Masʿūdī's propounding his own view before criticizing Avicenna's (*Jawābāt*, 33):

> This esteemed [objector] ought to start by objecting to the arguments he cites from the *Ishārāt* and only then proceed to set out his own position. For it is insufficient for one who goes against the majority (*jumhūr*) view on a certain point [simply] to set out his own view. Instead, he should [first] confute the arguments of [his] predecessors and identify any weakness or error in the premises of these arguments.

Other criticisms are substantive. In most discussions, al-Rāzī offers solutions to al-Masʿūdī's objections by exposing them either as involving flawed reasoning or as resting on misinterpretations of the main text, and in the process he sometimes develops Avicenna's views and arguments or elucidates the main text, occasionally drawing on further Avicennan sources (for a case study, see Shihadeh 2014b). However, this does not stop him in one discussion in this work from agreeing with criticisms directed at Avicennan doctrines by Abū l-Barakāt and al-Masʿūdī (*Jawābāt*, 39, 51). The *Jawābāt* affords us valuable insight into what al-Rāzī considers to be inadequate commentarial practice, which puts into sharper focus the commentarial procedures that he later develops in his full commentary on the *Ishārāt*. It furthermore reveals the extent to which his engagement with the Avicennan and counter-Avicennan currents in Khurāsān and Transoxania shaped his own thinking.

Having presented my distinction between exegetical and aporetic commentaries, I propose that al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* is a deliberate and systematic confluence of these two previously distinct genres, and that this confluence is driven by his critical dialectical method of investigation. In general, the exegetical component of the *Sharḥ* corresponds to the "gleaning of the pith," as al-Rāzī puts it, and as such serves partly to overview succinctly Avicenna's philosophical system and in the process identify and structure its constituent problems, theories, and arguments. The aporetic component corresponds to the criticism to which he subjects the views gleaned, both by weighing up arguments deployed in other, mainly counter-Avicennan sources and by deploying arguments of his own. We shall return to this commentarial procedure shortly. Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*, therefore, is a hybrid commentary—to my knowledge, the first of its kind—though in the final analysis it should nonetheless be classed as an exegetical commentary, a *sharḥ*, since it provides extensive exposition of the main text.

How this innovation of al-Rāzī was received in later sources is yet to be studied. Al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) took exception to it and reacted by advocating a more conventional view of what an exegetical commentary should be. Briefly put, it should consist only of exposition (*sharḥ, tafsīr*), to the exclusion of aporetics, which may amount to refutation (*naqḍ, radd, qadḥ*) (*Ḥall*, 1, 162–63; 2, 147). His own commentary on the *Ishārāt*, titled *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt* (*Solutions to the Aporias [Raised] on the Pointers*), is accordingly a traditional exegetical commentary, which includes a strong counter-aporetic element.

14.4. The Preface

Having set the scene, we should now home in on our text to map out some of the broader contours of al-Rāzī's commentarial method and agenda in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*. We start with the book's preface before turning to its schematic macrostructure and then the microstructure and workings of individual sectional commentaries.

In the preface to the *Sharḥ*, we are afforded vital details on some of the circumstances that surrounded and motivated its writing. The following translation is based on the published edition, with an important modification. (The first sentence is too long; but I render it faithfully and mark its main parts with numbers for clarity.) After praising philosophy as the most excellent of the sciences, al-Rāzī writes (*Sharḥ*, I, 2–3):

> [1] Since *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, of the books of the Chief Master [Avicenna], although small in size, is nonetheless abundant in knowledge, great in name, impenetrable in composition, difficult to understand, containing of great wonders, concordant with the views of intelligent people, and includes important points (*nukat*) and remarkable insights (*fawāʾid*) which most extended summae are devoid of and are not found in any of the lengthier works, [2] and as I have seen that most [learned] people exert themselves to comprehend its contents,[5] seeking out its hidden profundities (*asrār*) and principles (*mabānī*), poring over the enigmas (*ghawāmiḍ*) and problems (*mushkilāt*) therein, and studying the insights and important points it contains, and I have observed that some of them return from it empty-handed and turn despondently to other affairs, [3] and having spent a good portion of my life researching its precious contents and understanding its passages, and exploring its hidden profundities and delving into its depths, [4] I have decided to set down these insights to serve as guidance to those seeking this great objective and noble aim. I therefore focused my attention to setting out this commentary, structuring it, dividing it into sections, and revising it (*talkhīṣ dhālika l-sharḥ wa-tartībi-hi wa-tabwībi-hi wa-tahdhībi-hi*), steering clear of prolixity that causes tedium as well as brevity that results[6] in shortcomings.
>
> I have dedicated [this book] to our eminent master the great *ṣadr* and foremost leader,[7] the guard of religion and champion of Islam and Muslims, the king of kings among scholars east and west, Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad the son of the *ṣadr* Abū Saʿīd al-Wazzān, may he be blissful. . . .[8] His knowledge extends to the pinnacle of the philosophers' research (*nihāyat aqdām al-ḥukamāʾ*), and he recognizes the varying

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[5] More literally, "to attain its meanings" (*taḥqīq maʿānī-hi*), i.e. to understand correctly the entirety of the text, and hence to be able to explain it.

[6] Reading *al-muʿaqqib* rather than *al-mataʿaqqib*.

[7] The title *ṣadr* here designates a high religious official who has both civic and religious authority (see "Ṣadr, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.).

[8] In the published, semicritical edition of the *Sharḥ* and most manuscripts, the name is replaced with "so and so" (*fulān*), apparently due to intervention by an early scribe. The only manuscript known to transmit the name is MS Konya, Bölge Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi 2559 (fol. 1b; Altaş 2013b, 115). I am grateful to Eşref Altaş for kindly sharing a copy of this manuscript page with me.

> ranks of scholars. . . . I have always been searching for someone able to recognize the extent of the hardships I endured to put this commentary together, and how much of my life I spent on studying the contents of notebooks[9] and leaves. So having arrived in his presence . . ., and learned of his wish that a full commentary on this book should be written[10] and that utmost care should be given to completing [the task] to perfection without shortcomings or long-windedness, such that it separates the husk (*qishr*) from the pith (*lubāb*) and the mirage from the water, I have unhesitatingly plunged into its ocean seeking to extract its pearls and hidden profundities.

The first pieces of information that we can draw from this passage are biographical. The book was commissioned by Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Wazzān (d. 598/1202),[11] a member of a distinguished scholarly family and the head of Shāfiʿīs in Rayy, who was closely connected to the Khwārazm-shāh Tekish (r. 567/1172–596/1200) (Altaş 2013a, 52–53). His son Muḥammad died in Tekish's siege in 595/1199 of the Ismāʿīlī fortress of Alamut (al-Rāfiʿī, *Tadwīn*, 2, 7–8). Al-Rāzī describes the book's dedicatee as a man of philosophical learning. His remarks that he has been searching for someone able to recognize his erudition, and that al-Wazzān "recognizes the varying ranks of scholars," evince his failure, prior to 580/1185, to secure major and stable patronage and imply that this was due to competition with less accomplished but better-connected scholars. One cannot help here but speculate that al-Masʿūdī and Ibn Ghaylān were among those who stood between him and securing patronage in Transoxania and that this may have contributed to the unflattering portrayal the two subsequently received in al-Rāzī's *Munāẓarāt*. It is possible that by becoming connected to al-Wazzān, a fellow Shāfiʿī from his hometown, al-Rāzī gained easier access to Tekish, eventually winning his patronage and subsequently that of his son ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 596/1200–617/1220).

The preface moreover throws light on al-Rāzī's momentous choice of the *Ishārāt* as the Avicennan text on which to write an extensive commentary. As a much more readable and accessible book, the *Najāt* may at first glance appear to be a more compelling choice, and it was in fact the focus of some commentarial activity in the twelfth century, as previously noted. So why did al-Rāzī opt for the *Ishārāt*? The first answer is that the text was already attracting much attention among his contemporaries, as indeed confirmed by further, scattered evidence. Most people, as he puts it, have been applying themselves to studying the text, drawn mainly by its aphoristic appeal. The *Ishārāt* was enigmatically terse, abstruse and laconic, and lacked section headings, which would have allowed readers to discern its structure and to navigate it. (On the book's indicative method, see

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[9] More literally, "quires" (*dafātir*). This could be a reference to books in general. However, reading prefaces should always take account of their literary quality and impact, and it would have had much greater impact to use an expression such as *kutub* or *asfār* had al-Rāzī's intention been simply to say that he read a massive amount. Which is why *dafātir* here probably refers to his own notes on the *Ishārāt*.

[10] This could mean either that al-Wazzān wanted to see a full commentary on the *Ishārāt*, or, less probably, that he wanted al-Rāzī to write a full commentary having already written a partial one, the *Jawābāt*.

[11] Some biographical sources refer to him as Ibn al-Wazzān. However, I have omitted "Ibn," following al-Rāzī and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Rāfiʿī (d. 623/1226), who were in direct contact with the family.

Gutas 2013, 346–50.) The twofold allure of the text therefore is that, at once, it presents a host of exegetical conundrums and philosophical puzzles and, as al-Rāzī observes, appears abundant in hidden philosophical profundities waiting to be unlocked, thereby challenging its twelfth-century readers both to resolve its puzzles and problems and to understand it. When Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) later remarked that the *Ishārāt* was the "holy book" (*zabūr*) of the philosophers, he was not simply underscoring its prestige and popularity, but also the fascination with its intricacies and hidden mysteries, which drove philosophers to write extensive commentaries thereon (Shihadeh 2016b, 84). The *Najāt*, by contrast, presented a comparatively unattractive choice for commentators: it was much longer and more systematic and readable than the *Ishārāt* and readily corresponded in content and structure to the more comprehensive *Shifāʾ*, which made it scarcely in need of exposition. That it nonetheless received full commentaries before the *Ishārāt*, despite the latter receiving much attention and being perfect commentary material, was most probably due to the scale of the challenge that writing a first-ever exegetical commentary on the entirety of the *Ishārāt* posed. To write a full commentary on the *Ishārāt*, and not simply to raise objections here and there, much groundwork was needed, and this, as we shall see, was among the principal contributions of al-Rāzī's pioneering *Sharḥ*.

Al-Rāzī's own interest in the *Ishārāt* rests, in part, on precisely the same reasons that aroused his contemporaries' fascination. He loved a challenge, as good commentators do, and the challenge that this text posed was not only formidable, but furthermore presented a unique opportunity to earn the recognition and patronage he felt he deserved. His chief objective, as he informs us, was to provide an interpretation of the entire text, and in the process to extract the insights and profundities hidden therein, tackle its puzzles and problems, and furnish it with structure and lemmas (*tartīb wa-tabwīb*). The same attention to structure is underscored in the preface to al-Rāzī's commentary on *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma* (1, 41), where he identifies the provision of sectional separators (*fawāṣil*) to mark problems (*maṭālib*), and section headings (*alfāẓ*) to identify topics (*maqāṣid*), as a vital aspect of commentary. All these features appertain to the exegetical component of al-Rāzī's commentary on the *Ishārāt*. The clearest allusion in the preface to the aporetic component lies in the declared intention to separate the husk from the pith without being, as al-Rāzī notes twice, either terse or verbose—an unmistakable reference to his previously described method of critical investigation. A further hint seems to lie in the mention of "problems" (*mushkilāt*) that the text raises or contains: these are philosophical puzzles, as opposed to "enigmas" (*ghawāmiḍ*), apparently a reference to exegetical difficulties.

By separating the "pith" (*lubāb*) from the husk, al-Rāzī seeks to arrive at the "essential Avicenna," so to speak. The fact that the *Ishārāt* is already quite pithy is, to my mind, the other main reason he chose to comment on it; and for the same reason, he later wrote a commentary on *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, another terse Avicennan work. Yet al-Rāzī wanted to distil the *Ishārāt* even further, by identifying the core theories of Avicenna's philosophy (the pith) and separating them from what he considered superfluous and of little value (the husk). The same impetus drove him to write the short précis aptly titled *Lubāb* *al-Ishārāt* (*The Pith of the Pointers*), his final *Ishārāt*-related instalment, which he completed in 597/1201 (Çelebī, *Kashf*, 1, 94). Having identified the pith, al-Rāzī in the *Sharḥ* explicates it, avoiding undue brevity or prolixity, so as to leave room for the other component of his method of investigation, for which the expository stage prepares—namely, the criticism of Avicenna's ideas.

14.5. Structure and Modus Operandi

14.5.1. Macrostructure

As already noted, one of the foremost contributions of the *Sharḥ* is the structure and lemmatization it confers on the *Ishārāt*, a point underscored by al-Rāzī himself. Structuring the *Ishārāt*, however, was no easy task. Avicenna's text is divided into twenty chapters—ten labeled "method" (*nahj*) in the Logic, and ten labelled "type" (*namaṭ*) in the Physics and Metaphysics—which are further subdivided into short, aphoristic passages introduced by indicative generic tags, except in the Logic, where more substantive headings are provided. The most important of these tags are "pointer" (*ishāra*, i.e., proof), "reminder" (*tanbīh*, i.e., one that draws attention to a point that should readily be known to the reader), and "false notion" (*wahm*, i.e., a notion—often a widely held belief—that arises from the psychological faculty of estimation). Coupled with the abstruseness of the contents, this stark format makes the text doubly difficult to navigate. This, as already observed, formed a formidable obstacle, arguably the principal obstacle that confronted anyone wanting to write a first-ever full commentary on the *Ishārāt*.

Al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ* preserves the tags, but introduces a much more discernible structure, dividing each chapter into several problems (*mas'ala*), each furnished with a substantive heading indicating its content. Some chapters are divided into two or three distinct parts (*qism*), which are in turn divided into problems. Problems are further subdivided into sections (*faṣl*), each consisting of a passage of Avicenna's text followed by commentary. And one exceptionally lengthy problem is subdivided into four subsections, each focusing on a different argument for the same view (II.VI.2, 443–96). In many cases, the headings provided by al-Rāzī are not extracted from the main text, but are original substantive interpretations contributed by him, sometimes using terminology not found in Avicenna. They provide valuable insights into the structure of Avicenna's difficult text, but are by no means merely descriptive. They are often equally headings for al-Rāzī's own commentary, and as such prescriptive and in the vein of the above-described procedure of "gleaning" and molding the gleanings into well-defined rubrics. To an extent, they impose on the main text the commentator's own program of precisely which questions ought to be framed and hence indicates the direction his commentary is likely to follow. This explains the frequent correspondence between headings in the *Sharḥ* and those in al-Rāzī's independent, noncommentarial works, such as the *Mabāḥith* and *Mulakhkhaṣ*. One example can be seen in the first part of the heading of *Sharḥ*, II.V.1 (discussed in section 14.7 below): "That the Determinant (*ʿilla*) for Dependence on a Cause Is Possibility, Rather Than Coming-to-Be." Avicenna neither uses the *kalām* expression "determinant" nor attempts to identify a determinant in the discussion commented on.[12] Al-Rāzī takes him to task for failing to do so, and proceeds to address the question himself.

Al-Rāzī, furthermore, often elucidates the structure of the original text in the course of his commentary, for instance by introducing a chapter with an outline of its contents or by explaining how one section relates to preceding and subsequent sections. So, in his introduction to chapter 1 of the Physics and Metaphysics (*Sharḥ*, II.I, 4), he lists the twelve problems to which the chapter is divided, and adds,

> These are the original problems (*al-masāʾil al-aṣliyya*) in this chapter [as opposed to discussions added by the commentator]. Each comprises several sections, which we shall interpret, and the manner of the connection among them (*kayfiyyat irtibāṭ baʿḍi-hā bi-baʿḍ*) we shall explain.

More-detailed elucidation of the organization of Avicenna's text is provided in al-Rāzī's commentary on individual passages. This interest in the structure of the main text, incidentally, is also a feature of his *Great Commentary* on the Qurʾān, which explores not only internal *sūra* structures, but also the order of *sūras*.

14.5.2. Microstructure and Commentarial Tasks

Turning to the structure of individual sections, we can now attempt a characterization of the commentator's modus operandi. Sectional commentaries, of course, vary widely, with the more important, cryptic, or problematic passages of the *Ishārāt* receiving complex and extensive commentary, in some cases running into tens of pages, and others deserving no more than a single-sentence comment. However, a typical sectional commentary will comprise some or all of the following elements, which serve several discernible tasks. It is when these elements are examined that the previously described hybrid commentarial nature of this text transpires. In general, the exegetical component of the *Sharḥ* is embodied chiefly in the first and second elements, and the aporetic component chiefly in the fourth. The third element serves a combination of exegetical and aporetic functions. Al-Rāzī's synthesis of the two genres is very much systematic, and hence deliberate. (For a representative sectional outline, see section 14.6 below.)

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[12] As I will show in a forthcoming study, the section heading in which this expression occurs in the *Najāt* (522) is an inauthentic, later addition to the text, influenced by al-Rāzī's framing of the problem. It does not occur in the absolute majority of manuscripts, including the earliest extant copy, MS Oxford, Hunt 534.

14.5.2.1. *Exegetical Commentary I: Overall Exposition (al-tafsīr).*

After citing the passage commented on in full, including the introductory tag, most sections follow this with a lucid and faithful, expository interpretation of the overall contents of the passage. This part of a sectional commentary is usually marked by the label "interpretation" (*al-tafsīr*), and in general focuses on the ideas, as opposed to the text of the *Ishārāt*. It serves a range of exegetical tasks, most notably the following:

1. Identifying the unstated conclusion of an argument (*gharaḍ, maqṣūd, maṭlūb*)
2. Identifying an unstated premise of an argument
3. Expounding the argument in a stricter syllogistic presentation, using plainer language
4. Expounding the views advanced in the passage, or the broader philosophical theory
5. Defining philosophical terms
6. Explaining the broader organization of the text by showing how the views advanced and the argument's premises relate to earlier and later sections; in some cases, the broader discussions in which the section occurs are summarized
7. Providing relevant additional material from other Avicennan works, especially the *Shifāʾ*
8. Contextualizing these views by placing them within wider debates and identifying contrary views, whether or not these are hinted at in Avicenna's text

In these ways, Avicenna's dense, enigmatic, and elliptical text is deciphered, expanded, and elucidated. In some cases, al-Rāzī identifies and isolates particular "discussions" (*baḥth*) that either are raised in the text, or arise from it, and merit focused attention (e.g. *Sharḥ*, II.I.1, 5 ff.; II.IIb.3, 175 ff.). Although the interpretation is meant to be faithful, it does not always adhere to the internal arrangement and presentation of the passage commented on, as the goal is not to track the text, but to unfold the ideas articulated in it in as clear a way as possible.

14.5.2.2. *Exegetical Commentary II: Textual Interpretation (tafsīr al-matn)*

In many sections, the overall interpretation is supplemented with segment-by-segment analytical commentary on the Avicennan passage, either in full or part. The exception is where the wording of the main text is "in need of no explanation" (e.g., *ammā ʿibārat al-kitāb fī hādhā l-faṣl fa-ghaniyya ʿan al-sharḥ* [*Sharḥ*, II.I.7, 80]). Here the commentary is often introduced with the expression "interpretation of the main text" (*tafsīr al-matn*), and accordingly pays closer attention to the text, as opposed simply to the ideas. Each segment of the text is introduced by "As to his assertion . . ." (*wa-ammā qawlu-hu*), and the interpretation is often and signposted with "The meaning (*maʿnā, murād*) of this is . . ." This part of the sectional commentary serves a number of functions, above all explaining how Avicenna's text says what it is purported to say in the foregoing overall exposition. It also explains other expressions in the text of the *Ishārāt*, and in some cases offers alternative readings to it, referring to multiple copies of the *Ishārāt* that al-Rāzī had at his disposal (e.g. *Sharḥ*, II.I.1, 18; cf. *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 1, 41, for a more general discussion of problems of textual transmission that often confront the commentator). Overall, therefore, textual interpretation is expository, though it frequently includes aporetic content as well.

14.5.2.3. *Aporias with Solutions*

In some cases, expository commentary is appended with one or more possible objections that al-Rāzī reproduces from other sources, or himself raises against the Avicennan view or argument in question, but without himself being committed to these objections. He then proceeds to address them. These are sometimes indicated by the expression, "If it is said . . ." (*fa-in qīla*), or occasionally by "objection" (*shakk*) or "question" (*suʾāl*), and the response by, "We will say . . ." (*naqūlu*), or "The response is . . ." (*fa-l-jawāb*).

If the objection is flawed—for instance, because it rests on a false premise or a misinterpretation of Avicenna's views—the commentary will expose the flaw. If, however, the objection identifies a weakness in an Avicennan view or argument, al-Rāzī will often attempt to develop, and perhaps to salvage, the view or argument in question. This developed version will be devised on purely Avicennan grounds, even if they stand contrary to al-Rāzī's own commitments. In one such case, to be examined in the next section, al-Rāzī acknowledges his rejection of the Avicennan theory on which his developed version of an Avicennan proof is premised, but explains, "We must interpret [Avicenna's] text in accordance with his own principles, rather than the principles of others," obviously including the commentator's own.

As noted, this part of the sectional commentaries shares features of exegetical and aporetic commentary. As the aporias are identified systematically, and as many of the aporias treated are put forth by the commentator himself and not reproduced from earlier sources, these discussions exhibit a thoroughly interrogatory reading of the main text, the same outlook that motivates aporetic commentary. Yet as al-Rāzī proposes solutions for these aporias, which provide further exposition of Avicenna's ideas and sometimes develop them significantly, these discussions exhibit characteristics of counter-aporetic, and thus exegetical, commentary.

14.5.2.4. *Aporias*

These may occur before or after, with or without, textual interpretation. When al-Rāzī is committed to a point of criticism—that is, if he advances an aporia without a satisfactory solution—it will, in most cases, be marked by the introductory, "One may argue . . ." (*wa-li-qāʾil an yaqūla*). It sometimes concludes with, "Let us resume our interpretation of the main text" (*wa-li-narjiʿ ilā sharḥ al-matn*), signaling a return to textual interpretation.

Al-Rāzī's criticisms of Avicenna's views, of course, vary widely in their nature and still require further study. They often involve criticism of one or more premises of Avicenna's arguments. In some cases, where Avicenna incorporates specifically religious language in metaphysical discussions, he is criticized for employing a rhetorical (*khiṭābī*) and hence merely persuasive (*iqnāʿī*) mode of discourse, as opposed to apodictic demonstrative (*burhānī*) discourse (for example, *Sharḥ*, II.IIb.8, 198; II.V.7, 417; II.VI.1, 435; II.VI.1, 438; II.VI.1, 442; II.VI.2, 489; II.VII.2, 521; II.VIII.1, 566). One key feature of al-Rāzī's criticisms is that they generally do not start from propositions that, at least in theory, a faithful Avicennist would not concede, since they are either evident or explicit commitments of Avicenna. So the criticisms generally do not build on each other. After al-Rāzī criticizes a specific Avicennan view (say, a component of a larger theory), and wishes to criticize a different, but related view (say, a different component of the same theory), he will start by suspending, or bracketing, his first point of criticism and granting, for the sake of argument, the view previously criticized. This he does using a variety of phrases, for instance, *in waqaʿat al-musāʿada, baʿda l-musāʿada, in sāʿadnā ʿalā, in sallamnā dhālika*, or *bi-taqdīr al-ṣiḥḥa*. So the discussion will be conducted—again, at least in theory—on largely Avicennan grounds.

As already mentioned, the aporetic content of the *Sharḥ* (both elements 3 and 4 above) is motivated by al-Rāzī's broader method of critical and interrogatory investigation, previously described. It should neither be equated with al-Ghazālī's offensive (refutative) and defensive (apologetic) drive in the *Tahāfut*, nor interpreted as a "diatribe" (*jarḥ*) against Avicennan philosophy, as al-Ṭūsī jokingly has it (while acknowledging the partial and hyperbolic nature of this characterization; *Ḥall*, 1, 162–63). As I submitted at the start of the present chapter, the point of reference for most previous scholarship on al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ*—that it is fundamentally an Ashʿarī criticism of Avicenna—is far too reductive and belongs to a grand narrative fixated on the notion of a perpetual clash between theology and philosophy. This narrative is self-fulfilling and has occasioned selective case studies, which back it up. To redress this imbalance, I shall in what follows examine two discussions that illustrate how the aporetic content of the *Sharḥ* often provides constructive criticism of Avicennan philosophy and cannot be reduced to refutation, no matter how refutation is defined.

14.6. Prime Matter and Corporeity

Our first discussion centers on aspects of Avicenna's theory of matter and corporeity, in particular the notion that prime matter is absolutely passive and deprived of actuality and accordingly that corporeity is not a characteristic of matter, but is rather invested to it by a substantial form known as corporeal form (*ṣūra jismiyya*). These aspects and their twelfth-century reception are discussed in greater detail in other publications (Shihadeh 2014b, for Avicenna and al-Rāzī's *Jawābāt*; 2016a, 160–68, for Abū l-Barakāt and al-Masʿūdī; in the present section I draw on both studies). Our focus in the present section shall be on the *Sharḥ*.

In Avicenna's view, body—in the sense of "natural body," defined as substance in which the three dimensions can be postulated—owes its subsistence to two principles, namely prime matter and corporeal form. Matter is a passive principle associated with potentiality. It does not exist of itself, and can only exist if it is paired with, and actualized by, corporeal form. Matter also lacks inherent formal preparedness, or positive characteristics and determination, such as three-dimensional continuity, divisibility, or shape, but has the potentiality as a passive substrate to receive contraries, such as continuity and discontinuity and different shapes. Hence, corporeity (*jismiyya*)—that is, three-dimensional continuity (*ittiṣāl*)—is not a predisposition of matter, and is not contributed to body by it. Corporeity is rather invested by corporeal form, a substantial form combined with prime matter to constitute natural body. This form is the active principle of body and associated with actuality, and as such it causes the realization of natural body.

In its actual existence in determinate bodies, natural body will have several concomitants, which are accidental to corporeity and hence play no role in the realization and subsistence thereof. Finitude, for instance, is concomitant to body because individual bodies consist of limited parcels of matter. Further accidental concomitants are associated with finitude, particularly determinate dimensions, surface, and shape. Together, these accidents of magnitude constitute "mathematical body," an accidental, and hence nonsubstantial, form that inheres in a corporeal substance.

Against this theory of matter, Abū l-Barakāt advocates the thesis that prime matter is corporeal and as such inherently characterized by continuous extension. He argues that there is clear evidence attesting the existence of a corporeal substrate common to all bodies, which remains unchanged as bodies undergo qualitative transmutation (*Muʿtabar*, 3, 195–96):

> Reflection reveals to us things that we call "matter" for other things, such as wood for a bed. Wood too has as its matter things that share its substrate with it, but differ from it with respect to form. For when wood is burned, ash remains and water and air separate. So earth (which is the ash), water, and air are the matter of wood, from which it is composed, and to which it decomposes. Therefore, each of water, earth, and air is a matter for things that are composed of them, which vary in that they have a higher proportion of some and a lower proportion of others. Finally, these [elements] share corporeity among them. Body, hence, is the prime matter for all; yet body itself does not have underlying matter, because we find that it neither is composed of another thing nor becomes decomposed to another thing.

By contrast, there is no evidence, he argues, to support Avicenna's thesis that corporeity is not a characteristic of prime matter, but is contributed to body by a distinct, corporeal form. He also confutes the arguments that Avicenna submits in support of this theory, a point to which we shall return shortly.

To prove that body consists of a compound of prime matter and corporeal form, Avicenna argues from change that body undergoes in respect to its continuity and discontinuity (an adaptation of Aristotle's proof of prime matter from qualitative generation and corruption). In the *Ishārāt*, the proof occurs in the first chapter of the Physics and Metaphysics, titled "On the Reality of Bodies" (*tajawhur al-ajsām*). (Al-Rāzī remarks in the introduction of the chapter [*Sharḥ*, II.I, 3–4] that *tajawhur* here denotes "reality" [*ḥaqīqa*], as opposed to "becoming a substance," since body is by definition, and hence invariably, a substance.)

In the first five sections of the chapter, divided in al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ* into two problems, Avicenna refutes atomism and affirms that body is a continuum and hence infinitely divisible (*Ishārāt*, 2, 152–67; *Sharḥ*, II.I–II, 4–24). The argument we are after appears in the sixth section, which al-Rāzī includes in the third problem, titled "On Proving Prime Matter" (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 24–32). This section goes as follows (*Ishārāt*, 2, 172–73):

> *Pointer*. You have come to know that a body has a continuous, three-dimensional magnitude, and that it is susceptible to discontinuity and fragmentation. You also know that what is continuous in itself is different from the recipient of continuity and discontinuity, whose receptivity is itself attributed by both [i.e., as receptivity to continuity and discontinuity]. Therefore, the potentiality for this reception is different from the existence in actuality of that which is received, and different from its shape and form. This potentiality belongs to [something] other than what is the same as what is continuous in itself, which at the occurrence of discontinuity passes away, and a different [thing] comes to be, and the like of which then comes to be anew at the restoration of continuity.

So, from the views that body is continuous and that it is infinitely divisible, proved earlier in the chapter, it follows that body has something in actuality and something in potentiality. What it has in actuality is continuity, and what it has in potentiality is discontinuity, which occurs when the body is divided. Likewise, after a body is divided into two, its two separate parts will have the potentiality to become continuous. So there must be something in body that has the potentiality to receive (*qabūl*) both continuity and discontinuity. This recipient of continuity and discontinuity, however, cannot be the same as continuity itself. For the recipient must exist before and after the change; yet continuity passes away at the occurrence of discontinuity. Therefore, there must be something in body, other than continuity or discontinuity, that serves as the recipient for both and remains unaltered by the change. And that is matter. Body, hence, consists of the combination of prime matter, which is pure potentiality and in itself devoid of corporeity, and corporeal form, which invests body with three-dimensionality and continuity. The above passage is cross-referenced a little later in the *Ishārāt*, where its unstated conclusion is confirmed (2, 182–83).

Al-Rāzī's commentary on this section consists of the following parts:

1. A succinct and faithful expository interpretation of Avicenna's argument, labeled "*al-tafsīr*" (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 25).
2. An objection (*shakk*) raised against the argument, together with al-Rāzī's solution (*ḥall*) (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 25–26). The objection is introduced simply with, "There is an objection to this" (*wa-hā-hunā shakk*). Al-Rāzī, as we shall see, proposes an improved version of Avicenna's argument.

3. An objection of al-Rāzī's own against Avicenna's argument, marked by "One may argue" (*wa-li-qāʾil an yaqūla*) (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 26–28).
4. Textual interpretation of Avicenna's text, marked by "Let us resume our interpretation of the text" (*tafsīr al-matn*) (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 28–31). Unlike the initial expository interpretation, this textual interpretation is based on al-Rāzī's improved argument, rather than Avicenna's original argument.
5. An argument against hylomorphism, introduced by "Know that the deniers of [the existence] of matter may argue . . ." (*li-nufāt al-hayūlā an yaqūlū*) (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 31–32). The phrasing and the fact that the argument is given without a response suggest al-Rāzī's commitment to the argument.
6. A short concluding observation that Avicenna's argument can be modified to demonstrate that magnitude is different from corporeity (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 32). This point takes its cue from the *Shifāʾ* and *Najāt* (Shihadeh 2014b, 370–74).

We shall concentrate here on parts 2–3, and shall draw on part 4 when discussing part 2. The first objection is presented as follows:

> Before division, the body is one, and after division it becomes two bodies. So what is lost (*zāʾil*) is unity, and what arises (*ṭāriʾ*) is duality. However, both are accidents, and their substrate is body. Therefore, this proof establishes that unity and multiplicity are different from body, and that they alternate on it. So the substrate must be body, and what inheres in it must be unity and multiplicity. This is confirmed in that, after it undergoes division, body will not cease to be body. So we conclude that what is lost at the occurrence of division is something other than corporeity.

The source of this objection—left unidentified in al-Rāzī's commentary—is none other than al-Masʿūdī's *Shukūk* (Shihadeh 2016a, 164–68). In the first section, he targets Avicenna's foregoing argument on the grounds that it merely establishes that continuity is different from the recipient of continuity, and that it hence falls short of demonstrating that body consists of prime matter and corporeal form.

Al-Masʿūdī argues that the distinction between continuity and recipient, on which the proof hinges, is not between some substantial form and prime matter, but merely a distinction between accidental magnitude and corporeal substance, that is, body. When a body undergoes division, its corporeity, that is, its nonaccidental continuity, will not be affected. For the process of division will only result in two bodies, and these will be no less corporeal than the original body. Nor will there be any change in corporeity if the continuity between these two parts is then restored. Division, rather, only results in a loss of unity and magnitude, which are both accidents in the category of continuous quantity. It follows that the subject that receives the alternating accidents of continuity, but itself remains unaffected by this change, is not prime matter, but body. Therefore, since it fails to identify genuine substantial change in body, Avicenna's proof falls short of proving that body consists of the combination of matter and form. Al-Masʿūdī briefly proposes an alternative proof of prime matter, which presupposes the theory that prime matter is inherently corporeal—so there would be no need to postulate a corporeal form—and that body consists of the combination of matter and species form (*ṣūra nawʿiyya*). Both the objection and this alternative theory of matter, as al-Rāzī points out in the *Jawābāt*, already have their basis in criticism directed against Avicenna's theory of matter by Abū l-Barakāt (Shihadeh 2014b, 380–81).

Al-Rāzī tells us that both Avicenna's proof of prime matter and Abū l-Barakāt's and al-Masʿūdī's objection to this proof had become widely influential among his contemporaries (Shihadeh 2014b, 381–82). Ibn Ghaylān al-Balkhī adapts the objection into his defense of atomism (*Ḥudūth*, 123). Yet although al-Rāzī does not subscribe to Avicenna's hylomorphism, he swims against the dominant current, not only by rejecting the objection but by going further to develop Avicenna's proof in response to it. This he does in his dedicated response to al-Masʿūdī, in his commentary on the *Ishārāt* and indeed in his other philosophical works, where the objectors are not identified.

Let us resume from where we left off in the *Sharḥ*. After al-Rāzī summarizes the objection, he writes (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 25):

> Know that this objection can only be solved if the demonstration is explicated in its better-formulated version (*al-wajh al-mulakhkhaṣ*),[13] which is to say: When body undergoes division, the determinate corporeity that exists therein passes away, and two other determinate corporeities come to be; since this is the case, a determinate corporeity must exist in a substrate.

The most striking feature in this argument is that the central term *jismiyya* is here used in a particular rather than a universal sense. Avicenna does not use the expression in the plural form (just as he would not pluralize "three-dimensionality"), as for him it denotes indeterminate formal corporeity, which all bodies have in common. However, as he explains in several places in his commentary on this section, and in more detail in the *Jawābāt*, al-Rāzī defines *jismiyya*, rendered here as "determinate corporeity," as an individual entity qua body. Al-Rāzī hence can speak of "an individual determinate corporeity" (*jismiyya muʿayyana*) (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 29) and of two or more determinate corporeities (*jismiyyatān*).

Al-Rāzī's "more developed version" is nowhere to be found in Avicenna's works, and is sufficiently different from Avicenna's own argument that it merits being treated as an altogether new argument. It is in fact an argument that al-Rāzī himself, as he tells us elsewhere, "devised so as to substantiate the Shaykh's proof," in order to "respond to this objection" (*Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 21). He clearly recognizes that the objection leveled by Abū l-Barakāt and al-Masʿūdī exposes a real flaw in Avicenna's argument, one that he felt could be addressed by what would turn out to be a radical reinterpretation of the argument.

Al-Rāzī begins by substantiating the minor premise in his argument, that when a body undergoes division, the original determinate corporeity passes away and two new determinate corporeities come to be (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 25–26). The two determinate corporeities that exist after the change, he argues, cannot be already present in the original body before the change; for otherwise, the original body would be composed of two discrete parts, and by the same reasoning each part would be composed of two further parts, which would entail that matter consists of parts that are either finite and indivisible, or infinitely divisible: two versions of atomism that had already been refuted earlier in the same chapter of the *Ishārāt*. Therefore, the two resulting determinate corporeities come to be and replace the original determinate corporeity at the occurrence of division.

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[13] For this sense of *mulakhkhaṣ*, see Shihadeh 2014b, 383 n. 83.

The notion that a determinate corporeity passes away when an individual body undergoes division is substantiated a little later in the section (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 29–30). A determinate corporeity, he argues, has unity and haecceity (*khuṣūṣiyya*) over and above its essence; and it is by virtue of its unity and haecceity that a determinate corporeity is individuated as *this* individual thing (*shakhṣ*). Therefore, when a determinate corporeity loses its unity, it loses its existence as the individual thing it is, even though the original and resultant bodies are identical to the original body in their essence.

The major premise in al-Rāzī's developed argument is that the possibility of existence or nonexistence of anything that comes to be or passes away must precede this coming-to-be or passing away, and hence, according to Avicenna, must be already present in a substrate. The Avicennan account that dispositional possibility is real and must exist in a substrate (on which see Shihadeh 2016a, 111–20) is one that al-Rāzī himself argues against elsewhere in the *Sharḥ* (II.V.4, 405–8). However, he explains a little later in the section why he appeals to this view (II.I.3, 31):

> If it is said, "Do you not maintain that possibility is nonexistent?," we will say: Indeed. However, according to the Shaykh [Avicenna], it is existent; and we must interpret his text in accordance with his own principles (*yajibu ʿalay-nā tafsīr kalāmi-hi ʿalā mā yuṭābiqu uṣūla-hu*), rather than the principles of others.

The commentator's own non-Avicennan commitments should not stop him from providing a faithful Avicennan exposition of Avicenna's views.

So al-Rāzī's more developed Avicennan argument goes as follows. Since the original determinate corporeity passes away when the body is divided, and is replaced by two new determinate corporeities that come to be, and since this passing away and coming-to-be must occur in a substrate, it follows that there must be a substrate within the body that is different from the original and resultant determinate corporeities. And that is matter. In this reinterpretation of Avicenna's argument, the thing received by the material substrate is no longer continuity or discontinuity, but an individual determinate corporeity, which owes its individual unity to continuity, and passes away when its unity is lost at the occurrence of discontinuity. Al-Rāzī's new version of the argument, hence, has the advantage of being unsusceptible to the objection raised by Abū l-Barakāt and al-Masʿūdī, since it starts from substantial, rather than merely accidental, change.

Although in other works, as mentioned, he claims credit for this innovative argument, al-Rāzī does not do so in the *Sharḥ*, but instead presents it simply as a "more developed version" of Avicenna's argument and then goes on in his textual interpretation to illustrate how the *Ishārāt* argument can be reinterpreted along these new lines. In the *Jawābāt*, he emphasizes that the argument he develops has genuine Avicennan credentials, and provides evidence from the *Mubāḥathāt* of Avicenna and the *Taḥṣīl* of his student Bahmanyār (d. 459/1066) attesting their commitment to the principle that "the determinate corporeity that exists prior to division passes away at the occurrence of division" (Shihadeh 2014b, 387–88). He adds, "We have cited these discussions so that no one would claim that what I have set out [i.e., the premise of the new argument] is not a view of" Avicenna.

Al-Rāzī develops the argument because he was genuinely convinced it was defensible—though not in the form set out by Avicenna—against the charge that it started from mere accidental change. Notwithstanding, he goes on to direct a counterargument of his own—a reductio ad absurdum—against his developed version of the argument (*Sharḥ*, II.I.3, 26–27).[14] The first premise, he writes, cannot be conceded. For if it is true that when divided an individual thing passes away, then the dividing of a body will involve the passing away of the entire body, and not only the determinate corporeity existing therein. Let us consider how division affects the material substrate in the body, whose existence is supposedly proved by the argument. Before the body is divided, this parcel of matter was either (*a*) one in quantity, or (*b*) not one in quantity. If (*a*) it was one, then at the occurrence of division, it will either (*a.1*) remain one, or (*a.2*) be multiplied. If (*a.1*) it remains one, then the matter of the two resultant parts of the divided body will be one, and the determinate corporeity will either (*a.1.1*) remain one, or (*a.1.2*) become multiplied. Determinate corporeity cannot (*a.1.1*) remain one after the division of the body; for otherwise the form and matter of each of the two resultant parts of a divided body would be one and the same, which is absurd. Nor (*a.1.2*) can it become multiplied; for otherwise two forms of the same type would inhere in the same material substrate, which is impossible. If, however, (*a.2*) matter is one in quantity before division, and is multiplied by division, then the body in its entirety, including its form and matter, will pass away, which is absurd. As to the other horn of the dilemma, if (*b*) before division, matter is not one, then the number of material parts constituting a body must correspond to the divisions possible therein; however, each part will then be combined with an individual determinate corporeity, and matter will be atomistic, both false consequents. Therefore, the first premise must be false. Al-Rāzī briefly adds that the second premise too is false, as he will show in chapter 5, where he discusses Avicenna's view that possibility must exist in matter (cf. *Sharḥ*, II.V.4, 403–8).

So, to recap, al-Rāzī tacitly acknowledges that Abū l-Barakāt and al-Masʿūdī identify a weakness in Avicenna's proof for prime matter and corporeal form, but it is a weakness that can be overcome if the proof is developed. So he proceeds to develop the proof to the best of his abilities, effectively constructing a wholly new proof. Avicenna's theory is thus salvaged, but only momentarily. For this more developed proof fails the second test, which al-Rāzī himself deploys. Still, this conclusion and the argument he submits against hylomorphism later in the section should not be taken as a defense of *kalām* atomism. After all, his commentary on Avicenna's refutation of atomism (*Sharḥ*, II.I.1–2, 4–24) suggests that he was in overall agreement with the arguments advanced in the *Ishārāt*. There is evidence in other sources that, at least at some stage in his career, al-Rāzī suspended judgement on the nature of matter (see, in particular, his *Dhamm*, 255); but whether this was his position when he wrote the *Sharḥ* awaits further study.

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[14] Due to constraints of space, whenever two subarguments are given at any point in this argument, I provide only the first.

14.7. CONCURRENTISM

Next we are going to examine al-Rāzī's commentary on the first three sections of chapter 5 of the Physics and Metaphysics of the *Ishārāt*, titled "On Demiurgy and [Atemporal] Creation" (*fī l-ṣunʿ wa-l-ibdāʿ*). (This subject is discussed in more detail in Shihadeh 2016a, chap. 3, on which the present section draws.) The discussion turns on a key aspect of Avicenna's theories of efficient causation and modal ontology, which he flags as a major point of difference between his philosophy and competing systems of *kalām*. The central question is whether effects brought into being by metaphysical efficient causes (that is, causes of existence, as opposed to natural efficient causes, which only produce motion) depend on their causes on account of the effects' (temporal) coming-to-be (*ḥudūth*) or their possibility (*imkān*). This question is important for Avicenna for several reasons, above all because it underpins his theories that a pre-eternal being can be caused, and that as long as the effect exists, it must be conserved in being perpetually by a cause. On the basis of the latter theory, he propounds a form of concurrentism, according to which forms are produced by the higher metaphysical efficient causes mostly in accordance with preparatory natural causes.

Avicenna's treatment of this problem comes explicitly in response to classical *kalām* doctrines. Earlier studies identify certain Ashʿarī doctrines as the main target of criticism, in particular occasionalism and the denial of natural causality (for instance, Marmura 1984). In my view, however, the true target of criticism is a different complex of doctrines, which are characteristic of the Bahshamī branch of Baṣran Muʿtazilism. I shall mention only two Bahshamī views here, and shall refrain from discussing Ashʿarīs (for more details on both sides, see Shihadeh 2016a, 86–88).

The first doctrine is set out in the course of the Bahshamī proof of the existence of God starting from creation ex nihilo. This proof is set out as an analogy (*qiyās*) that starts from the standard classical-*kalām* notion that human acts (*fiʿl*) are temporally originated entities, specifically accidents. These entities are argued to be dependent (*iḥtāja*) on their agents (*fāʿil*), most evidently because when I act or refrain from acting, I do so according to my motives and countermotives (Ibn Mattawayh, *Majmūʿ*, 1, 69–72). In *kalām* terms, this dependence of the act on its agent is a judgment (*ḥukm*) that applies to the act-entity. The next step for a Bahshamī theologian is to explain why this judgement applies to the act—in other words, the determinant (*ʿilla*) of the judgment. This determinant must be an attribute of the act-entity; and because all acts without exception depend on their agents, this attribute must be common to absolutely all act-entities. Different arguments are deployed to identify the attribute that serves as the determinant. For instance, it is argued through a process of disjunction and elimination that this attribute is either the act-entity's continuous existence (*istimrār al-wujūd*), or its prior nonexistence, or its temporal origination. It cannot be the continuous existence of the act, as acts often outlast their agents. A builder produces accidents of composition in matter when he constructs a building, and these continue to exist even after he dies. Nor, obviously, can the determinant be simply the prior nonexistence of the act-entity. Therefore, the determinant of the act-entity's dependence on an agent must be the act-entity's coming-to-be (Mānkdīm, *Sharḥ*, 119; Ibn Mattawayh, *Majmūʿ*, 1, 73).

From this view, it follows that if an existing entity does not pass away, but continues to exist, its continued existence, or persistence (*baqāʾ*), is self-sustaining and uncaused. According to the Bahshamīs, atoms and several classes of accidents (for instance, accidents of color, life, and composition) persist, whereas other accident classes (for instance, accidents of pain and sound) lack persistence, so the accident exists for no longer than a moment, though a series of instances of the same accident may come to be in successive moments, giving the impression of persistence (e.g., Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 1, 149–52; 1, 174). Created entities that continue to exist, hence, depend on the agent that creates them only to bring them into being, but not for their continued existence, during which they will be independent of it. The composition produced in the matter of a building, for example, depends on the builder for its coming-to-be, but continues to exist even if he then dies or becomes incapacitated (Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 1, 68).

Against the backdrop of these Bahshamī doctrines, we can now turn to Avicenna's *Ishārāt* (cf. Shihadeh 2016a, 89–95). The first three sections of chapter 5 of the Physics and Metaphysics, mentioned at the beginning of our present section, are grouped by al-Rāzī into one problem aptly titled "That the Determinant for Dependence on a Cause Is Possibility, Rather Than Coming-to-Be, and That during Its Continued Existence a Thing Will Not Be Independent of a Cause" (*fī anna ʿillat al-ḥāja ilā l-muʾaththir hiya l-imkān lā l-ḥudūth, wa-anna l-shayʾ ḥāl baqāʾi-hi lā yastaghnī ʿan al-sabab*) (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 385).

The first section (*Ishārāt*, 3, 57–59), labeled by Avicenna a "false notion" (*wahm*), describes the widespread belief that the relationship between agent (*fāʿil*) and effect (*mafʿūl*), where the agent brings the effect into being, should always be understood as one between voluntary agent and voluntary act. According to this notion, as soon as the effect comes to be, it ceases to be dependent on its agent. A building will continue to exist even after the builder dies. Likewise, even if God were to pass away, the world, according to this view, would continue to exist.

In the second section (*Ishārāt*, 3, 59–65), Avicenna argues that the expression "agent" should be defined strictly speaking as a thing that engenders the existence of another thing after it was nonexistent. Any other notions—such as being voluntary or natural—ordinarily included in the concept of "agency" are extraneous, rather than essential, to it. For neither the expression "voluntary agent" nor "natural agent" involves either repetition or contradiction.

Avicenna then posits the following question, which starts from this definition of "agency." If the concept of "effect," in the sense described of a thing that comes to be in time, includes (*a*) existence, (*b*) nonexistence, and (*c*) the temporal posteriority of existence to nonexistence, then on account of which of these elements does the temporal effect depend on its cause? By a process of elimination, he argues that it must be existence. For nonexistence, obviously, is uncaused; and the temporal posteriority of the existence of a temporally originated thing to its nonexistence is a necessary attribute thereof, and as such uncaused. The section closes with a further question: Is the existence of a temporally originated thing caused because it is not necessary, or because it is temporally originated?

Avicenna answers this question in the third section, labeled "Concluding Discussion and a Pointer" (*takmila wa-ishāra*) (*Ishārāt*, 3, 65–71). He argues that the conception "necessary of existence, not in itself, but through another" is said both of entities that have always (*dā'iman*) been necessitated through another and of entities that have been necessitated through another entity for a finite duration of time. In comparison, the conception "preceded by nonexistence" is a more specific conception, as it is said only of the latter class of entities. Both conceptions are predicable of "being dependent on another for existence." However, if a general conception and a specific one are predicated of the same conception, then, Avicenna reasons, the more general conception will be predicated of this conception essentially and in the first place, and the more specific conception will be predicated of it nonessentially and secondarily. Therefore, a thing depends on its cause because it is necessitated through another, and not because its existence is preceded by nonexistence. And because being necessitated through another is an attribute characteristic of effects permanently, and not only at the moment they come to be, their dependence on their causes must be equally permanent.

Al-Rāzī's commentary on these three sections begins by contextualizing Avicenna's views (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 386–88). The doctrines criticized are identified as those of the theologians and set out in a more developed and nuanced fashion. In his commentary on the first section, al-Rāzī also introduces the *kalām* distinction between the respect in which the effect depends on its cause and the determinant (*'illa*) of this dependence, which is absent in Avicenna's treatment (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 386–87).

In his commentary on the second section, al-Rāzī begins by rejecting the semantic point made by Avicenna. The theologians are correct, he says, to assert that in the Arabic lexicon the expression "act" (*fi'l*) refers to a certain type of temporally originated occurrence, namely one that is produced by an agent possessed of volition and capacity. Hence, in their view, the expressions "voluntary act" and "natural act" do involve, respectively, repetition and contradiction (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 389–90). Al-Rāzī, however, considers this question philosophically trivial, since Avicenna is entitled to redefine "act" without having to ground his definition in any lexical sense of the expression.

More important is the philosophical problem raised in the second section (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 391–92). Al-Rāzī proposes to conduct his interpretation by positing two questions: Q1. What exactly in a temporally originated entity is caused? Q2. What is the determinant of the temporally originated entity's dependence on a cause? Al-Rāzī observes that the precise objective of Avicenna's discussion in the second section is ambiguous, but is more likely to be centered on the former question. He adds that "we shall discuss both problems" and proceeds to set out a lucid reading of Avicenna's above-described argument that what is caused in a temporally originated entity is precisely its existence. The problem, as al-Rāzī remarks in the first section, is that all sound-minded people agree that it is the existence of the effect that requires a cause. However, the real point of contention, which Avicenna neglects to address, is raised in Q2 (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 387).

Al-Rāzī goes on to offer his own answer to Q2. He advances a *reductio* argument against the theological thesis that the determinant of a temporally originated entity's dependence on a cause is its temporal origination. Temporal origination, the argument goes, is a mode (*kayfiyya*) of the existence of the temporally originated effect, and hence presupposes this existence. The existence of this effect, in turn, presupposes, and depends on, the thing being brought into existence; and being brought into existence presupposes that the effect already depends on its cause; and this dependence on its cause must have a determinant. However, this determinant has already been postulated to be the temporal origination of the effect. So for temporal origination to be the determinant, it must be prior to, and determined by, itself, which is absurd. Therefore, temporal origination cannot be the determinant for the effect's dependence on its cause. So the determinant must be the only other alternative, which is the possibility of existence of the effect (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 391).

The third section is where Avicenna is supposed to answer Q2, and it is here that al-Rāzī dishes out his most scathing criticism, marked by the now-familiar "One may argue . . ." (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 393–94). Avicenna, we are told, wasted the entire three sections on superfluous discussions, in particular the notion that an effect depends on the cause for its existence, which no one in his right mind would dispute and as such is little more than pointless interpolation (*ḥashw*). Yet when it comes to addressing the all-important Q2, Avicenna fails to provide a sound argument, but simply asserts (*ṣādara*) the very view he claims to be in the process of demonstrating. For he starts by asserting that the conception "necessitated, not through itself, but through another" is said both of entities that "have always been necessitated through another" and of entities that have been necessitated through another for a finite duration of time. Yet this takes for granted that an entity that is not temporally originated, but pre-eternal, is caused, and that such an entity is hence constantly dependent for its existence on its cause. To this, al-Rāzī objects (*Sharḥ*, II.V.1, 394):

> But is this not the very point of contention! If this [i.e., "A pre-eternal thing depends for its existence on a cause"] is a self-evident, primary proposition, then why do

> you[15] have to argue for it at such great length? He ought instead to have asserted at the very beginning, "And our knowledge that the possible, whether it is beginningless or not, depends on a cause is self-evident and primary." However, his entire discussion, from the beginning of this chapter to the end of this [third] section, would then be pointless interpolation. If this proposition, however, is based on a demonstration, then where is this demonstration? What he does in fact is merely to repeat the very claim [that he wants to prove].

A *kalām* theologian will simply deny the unsubstantiated starting point of Avicenna's argument, and counter with the claim that only a temporally originated entity can be dependent on a cause. So, according to al-Rāzī, Avicenna commits two errors: he wastes much effort to proving the obvious, and when he eventually turns to the real problem, his reasoning appears circular. Crucially, al-Rāzī is nonetheless committed to Avicenna's doctrine and supplies it with an entirely new proof of his own.

14.8. Concluding Remark

Let us step back and take stock. Going back to the general remarks I made at the start of this chapter, if the picture I presented in these twenty-odd pages is at least more complex than the standard portrayal of al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ* simply as an unconstructive refutation of Avicenna, then my mission has, to a great extent, been accomplished. In sections 14.6 and 14.7, we have seen how the commentator solves aporias by proposing new proofs, in the former case to support an Avicennan theory that he ultimately rejects, and in the latter to support one that he endorses and defends against earlier theological positions. My other hope is that this study has made a contribution toward freeing al-Rāzī, and by extension comparable medieval Arabic and Islamic thinkers, from the clutches of the dominant grand theory, and a case for a textual reading centered on a chronologically narrower context. It goes without saying that on all these fronts much further work is still needed.

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[15] That is, Avicenna. Reading *atayta* instead of *athbata*.

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CHAPTER 15

NAṢĪR AL-DĪN AL-ṬŪSĪ (D. 1274)

Sharḥ al-Ishārāt

JON McGINNIS

15.1. Life and Works

"The Third Teacher"—following Aristotle and al-Fārābī—Naṣīr al-Dīn Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī is arguably the most important and influential Shīʿī scholar of the Middle Ages. He was born 11 Jumādā I 597 / 17 February 1201 in Ṭūs, which was located in the modern Iranian province of Razavi Khorasan in northeastern Iran. His education, which included training in both the traditional and rational sciences, began at the feet of his father. Thereafter his studies took him to Nishāpūr, (Arabic) Iraq, and Mawṣil, where he studied with a number of scholars including two former pupils of the great Ashʿarite theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). In 630/1233, al-Ṭūsī came under the patronage of the Ismāʿīlī governor Muḥtasham Nāṣir al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. Abī Manṣūr, and thirteen years later, for reasons that are not entirely clear, he found himself in Alamūt, the fortress of the notorious Assassins. He remained at Alamūt for approximately twenty years, during which time he was extremely productive. In 653/1255, al-Ṭūsī was sent to negotiate with the Mongol khan, Hülegü, who was preparing to invade Persia. Seeing the way the winds were blowing, al-Ṭūsī ingratiated himself to Hülegü and accompanied the Mongol khan on his conquest of the west, which included the fall of Alamūt, the capture of Baghdad, and the death of the last ʿAbbāsid caliph. What role al-Ṭūsī played in these events is a matter of some dispute, although we do know that through his good works the Mongols left a number of Shīʿī holy sites unmolested. At around the age of sixty al-Ṭūsī was entrusted with the approximately ten-year construction at Marāgha in modern Azerbaijan of what would be the most impressive observatory then known. During this period he also entertained many of the luminaries of the time such as the Christian bishop and philosopher Gregory Bar Hebraeus, the Andalusian astronomer and mathematician Ibn Abī al-Shukr, the Persian logician and philosopher Najm al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī al-Kātibī, as well as others. For reasons unknown, he left Marāgha with some of his students for Baghdad, where he died shortly thereafter on 18 Dhū 'l-Ḥijja 672 / 25 June 1274.

15.2. The General Structure of Ṭūsī's *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt*

Al-Ṭūsī's *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt* (*Resolution of the Difficulties of the "Ishārāt"*) is, as the title suggests, a commentary on *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt* of Avicenna (370/980–427/1037). Although al-Ṭūsī mentions issues raised by a number of philosophers and theologians, like Abū Barakāt al-Baghdādī (465/1074–c. 568/1165) and Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī (fl. 582/1186), it is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī—whom al-Ṭūsī simply refers to as "The Excellent Commentator" (*al-fāḍil al-shāriḥ*)—who looms largest. Thus, to understand al-Ṭūsī's commentary, a few words about Avicenna's *Ishārāt* and al-Rāzī's understanding of the *Ishārāt*'s structure are apropos.

With the exception of mathematics, which is not treated, Avicenna's *Ishārāt* is divided along traditional disciplinary lines: logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, and practical philosophy, that is, ethics and politics. Beyond this broad similarity with earlier works in the Greco-Arabic scientific and philosophical tradition, the *Ishārāt* represents a significant departure from the standard presentation of the sciences, which is particularly evident in the *ḥikma* sections—that is, natural philosophy and first philosophy. For example, Avicenna intermingles material from metaphysics with natural philosophy and vice versa in a way that completely blurs traditional disciplinary lines. He barely discusses motion, the primary subject of the science of physics, and replaces it with a discussion of inclination (*mayl*). Frequently, the *Ishārāt*'s specific language and argumentation are uniquely Avicennan with only the loosest ties to traditional Aristotelianism. The new systemization of philosophy found in the *Ishārāt*, then, not to put too fine a point on it, cried out for commentary.

This fact certainly was not lost on al-Ṭūsī, who felt compelled to explain the seemingly muddled nature of the *Ishārāt*, when compared with earlier scientific and philosophical works, and particularly the structure of the first *namaṭ*, with its blatant mixture of physics and metaphysics. According to al-Ṭūsī, the *Ishārāt* is an entire reconceptualization of Avicenna's philosophical system in conformity with the ideals of an Aristotelian science as envisioned in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and Avicenna's own *Kitāb al-Burhān*. Thus, al-Ṭūsī writes:

> Know that this *namaṭ* includes discussions, some of which pertain to the natural [sciences] and others to [first] philosophy. That is because when the First Teacher [Aristotle] laid out the sciences, he began with natural things, which are prior relative to us, and then finished up with metaphysical things, which are prior in existence

> relative to the thing itself, moving step-by-step in laying out the sciences from the principles of sensible things to sensible things and from them to intelligible things. (I, preface, 139 [23])[1]

While there is some debate as to whether Aristotle himself actually followed this orderly subordination of one subject to another, there can be little doubt that al-Ṭūsī believed Avicenna had. Thus, al-Ṭūsī continues:

> The Shaykh [Avicenna] also wanted to begin with physics, but with the condition that he removes from it the [various] necessary promissory notes, [which pass] from one of the two sciences to the other [namely, between physics and metaphysics] owing to the confusion [that they create] for the student. Thus, he needs to consider the investigations associated with matter, form, and their states first. Before he considers them, however, he needs to explain the physical issues upon which those investigations are based. Hence, it is necessary for him to introduce the refutation of the atom, because it is the last of the presupposed objectives that are based upon some topic requiring a further promissory note. For this reason, this *namaṭ* includes discussions that are a mix of the two sciences. (I, preface, 140 [24])

According to al-Ṭūsī, then, the organization of the *Ishārāt* moves from those things better known to us, that is, sensible effects, to those things better known in themselves and prior by nature, namely, the causes of those effects. Additionally, however, al-Ṭūsī claims that earlier philosophical presentations frequently assumed the subsequent conclusions of technical points carried on elsewhere in the corpus. Apparently this approach of assuming definitions, demonstrations, and discussions to be explained latter was something of a pedagogical nightmare. Avicenna eliminated this confusing feature from his presentation, at least according to al-Ṭūsī, and in its place prioritized every discussion according to what logically preceded it. Call al-Ṭūsī's idea that the topics and discussions of the *Ishārāt* are ordered according to a decided priority relation, the Priority Principle.

Al-Ṭūsī used the Priority Principle to great advantage, particularly in response to what al-Ṭūsī considered the negative commentary of al-Rāzī. (See Shihadeh, in this volume, for a more positive spin on al-Rāzī's commentary.) While most of al-Ṭūsī's own commentary deals with undermining al-Rāzī's critique of specific Avicennan arguments, al-Ṭūsī also wants to show that al-Rāzī did not actually understand how the *Ishārāt* was ordered and as a consequence failed to see the larger picture concerning the objective of the *Ishārāt*.

Sometimes al-Ṭūsī's objections to al-Rāzī are small correctives, almost certainly with an eye to reminding the reader of the overall role of the Priority Principle. Thus, concerning why in the psychological *namaṭ* Avicenna treated perception prior to motion, al-Rāzī maintains:

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[1] The page numbers refer to the edition of Sulaymān Dunyā, followed by the corresponding pages in Ḥasan Zāde Āmolī's edition in brackets.

> [Avicenna] gave priority to perception only because volitional motion exists only when there is awareness of what is sought or what is fled, and so [motion] is posterior to awareness. Owing to that some believe, even if they were wrong, that some animals, like oysters and sponges, can be devoid of that motion. (III.7, 359 [402])

Here al-Rāzī seems to see Avicenna as prioritizing perception over motion on the basis that motion is a means, whereas what is perceived would seem to be the end of the motion. Against this understanding of Avicenna's ordering of the topics, al-Ṭūsī chides, "I say that it can also be said that an animal needs perception only for the sake of motion so that it moves toward what is suitable or unsuitable, and owing to that a plant does not perceive" (III.7, 359 [402]). In other words, there is a sense in which perception can likewise at times be viewed as a means, which has as its end motion. "The fact is," complains al-Ṭūsī:

> neither [motion nor perception] is prior to the other in this respect. For that reason, they both represent principles of two differentiae belonging to animals, both of which are equivalent in rank. Instead the way in which perception is *prior* to motion is that [perception] is nobler than [motion], since it is something sometimes sought for its own sake, as in humans, whereas motion is only ever sought for the sake of another. (III.7, 359 [402–3], emphasis added)

Al-Ṭūsī's point is simply that both motion and perception are sometimes means and sometimes ends for each other. Consequently, neither topic is prior from the point of view of explaining why Avicenna prioritized perception over motion in his presentation. Instead, according to al-Ṭūsī, Avicenna prioritized perception because we sometimes perceive just for the joy of it, that is, we desire it for its own sake, and so it is nobler.

While nothing serious seems at stake in this example, the prioritization of perception over motion (or action) plays an important role in al-Ṭūsī's commentary on the final *nimāṭ* of the *Ishārāt* when he sorely criticizes al-Rāzī's general understanding of the aim of the text. Moreover, it gives witness to an ongoing feature of al-Ṭūsī's commentary. He constantly reminds his reader both that the Priority Principle governs the progression of the *Ishārāt* and that al-Rāzī just as often fails to grasp fully the applications and implications of this principle. I return to al-Ṭūsī' Priority Principle at the end of this chapter, when I briefly look at how he integrates Avicennan metaphysics with metaethics.

15.3. Metaphysics and Theology in Ṭūsī's Commentary

It is difficult to speak of "al-Ṭūsī's metaphysics" as distinct from his interpretation of Avicenna and the *Ishārāt*. Still, Avicenna's thought was understood in very different ways as witnessed in al-Ṭūsī and al-Rāzī's very different readings of the *Ishārāt*. In what follows, I do not try to distinguish the historical Avicenna from Ṭūsī's Avicenna. Instead, I assume that al-Ṭūsī's interpretation of the metaphysics of the *Ishārāt* is simply al-Ṭūsī's own metaphysics. One further caveat, since metaphysical themes permeate literally every part of the *Ishārāt*, a full account of al-Ṭūsī's metaphysics would be a complete account of his *Ishārāt* commentary, which is impossible here. Still, *nimāṭ* IV, "On Existence and Causes," and V, "On Production and Creation," are arguably the "most metaphysical" sections of the *Ishārāt*, and so it is on these that I focus.

15.3.1. Ontology

Al-Ṭūsī identifies the existence to be treated in *namaṭ* IV with absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), that is, the existence predicated of both caused and uncaused things (IV, preface). A common enough assumption is that only what is sensible in principle, that is, the physical, exists. Indeed, up to this point the *Ishārāt* had treated only sensible existents and their actions. To indicate that this common assumption is mistaken, two examples of insensible existents are given: true nature (*ḥaqīqa*) (IV.2) and certain psychological powers (IV.3). As for the first, there is the true nature of, for example, humanity that belongs to all humans, for whatever we sensibly perceive of one another, those sensible features are merely accidental to us qua human. The true nature of human, then, goes beyond the sensible or imaginable qualities belonging to humans. Moreover, this true nature is common both to all the concrete particular instances of humans and to the universal concept of human. The second indication of nonsensible existents is sensation or imagination, for one does not sense sensation nor imagine imagination. In other words, one does not form some type of image of these animal faculties or powers, and yet certainly both exist.

The aim in these examples is merely to indicate that something insensible can be the principle and cause of the sensible (IV.4). Thus, for instance, just as the insensible true nature of human is the cause of individual sensible humans being human, so all the more so the First Principle of all existence can be something insensible. Al-Rāzī was unfortunately confused about Avicenna's intention at this point, al-Ṭūsī tells us, and "supposed that in that [argument, Avicenna] made the First Principle a member of the rest of the true natures by way of similarity, and he was convinced by the proof" (IV.4, 12 [548]). In effect, according to al-Ṭūsī, al-Rāzī erroneously thinks that for Avicenna "existence" is a univocal notion common to the First Cause and to everything else. This first "false" step has serious implications for the subsequent understanding of the Necessary Existent.

Before turning to the Necessary Existent, however, there is a discussion of causes (IV.5–7). While al-Ṭūsī considers how material, formal, efficient, and final causes are associated with one another as well as their relation to essences and existence, final causation is of particular interest since it gives rise to the problem of circular causation (IV.7). The problem is that the final cause is the end of action, and so only exists after the action. Yet since the final cause purportedly causes the agent to act, namely, it sets it into motion, the end is apparently the cause of its own existence. Avicenna's answer was to distinguish two ways that final causes can be related to agents: They stand in either a temporal (*muḥdath*) or an originating (*mubdaʿ*) relation to the agent. So, for example, I currently have as an end to lose twenty pounds. This *mubdaʿ*-end, which I currently possess, motivates me to act in certain ways, and so is the cause of my acting. Still, having as an end to lose weight is different from actually having lost the weight. Should I lose the weight, I'll have achieved this end qua *muḥdath*. In short, final causation appears to involve circular causation only because "final cause" or "end" is an equivocal term. It can mean either end qua *muḥdath* or end qua *mubdaʿ*.

Al-Rāzī, however, objects. While the distinction between *muḥdath* and *mubdaʿ* might work for cognizing agents, it does not work for natural agents and actions, as a stone's tending downward toward the center or as fire's tending upward away from the center. Al-Ṭūsī responds, perhaps not entirely successfully, that when the nature essentially requires something, as, for example, being in a certain place, the natural agent is ordered to that thing as potency is to act. This potency can be thought of as a certain prior awareness belonging to the nature and so function as a *mubdaʿ*-end.

Having spoken about causes in general, the issue of the First Cause is now broached (IV.8–29). Avicenna's celebrated modal ontology is introduced with its distinction between necessary in itself and possible in itself (IV.9–10). What is possible through itself is indifferent to existing or not to existing. Consequently, when it actually occurs, it must have a preponderator (*murajjiḥ*), that is, something that explains its occurrence rather than nonoccurrence.

Avicenna's famous *burhān al-siddīqīn*, that is, his metaphysical proof for the existence of God (IV.11–29), follows next. Since what is possible in itself requires another to explain its existence, that other is either something possible or necessary. If that other is something possible in itself, the discussion returns to the beginning. So one of the following options must be the case: (1) the causal series terminates at the Necessary Existent in itself; (2) the series involves an infinite regress; or (3) the series involves circular causation. The argument then proceeds to show that both (2) and (3) entail (1), namely that there is a Necessary Existent in itself.

The general strategy is twofold. First, shift the focus of the discussion from the individual possible existents to the whole (*jumla*) of those possible existents. Second, show that the whole of all and only possible existents requires a cause that exists outside of that whole, namely, something that exists necessarily through itself. Al-Rāzī himself notes that there is a distinction between essentially (or nontemporally) ordered causal series and temporally ordered causal series (IV.11, 231–22 [559–60]). In essentially ordered causal series, the causes exist simultaneous with the effect. So, for example, my form and matter are the internal causes of my existence, and they must exist as long as I exist. In contrast, a temporally ordered causal series does not require that the causes continue to exist with their effect. Thus, for instance, my father is a cause of me, but should he pass away, I can still continue to exist.

Al-Rāzī maintains that Avicenna's argument requires that the causes in question be essentially ordered. Thus he writes:

> This section depends upon showing that the cause may not be temporally prior to the effect [that is, that it is an essentially ordered series], since if it were [a temporally ordered causal series], it would be possible to trace back each possible thing to another before it but not to a first, which in their opinion is possible [that is, temporally ordered series can be infinite in the opinion of Avicenna]. As for when he establishes that the existence of the cause is inevitably simultaneous with the effect [namely, it is essentially ordered], then, in that case, were the series to occur, the causes and effects would be simultaneous, and the proof would be correct. (IV.11, 22 [560])

One way to think about al-Rāzī's criticism is to imagine a number line that extends infinitely, as in the series "$m - 1, \ldots - 3, - 2, - 1, 0, 1, 2, 3 \ldots n + 1$"; additionally posit some successor relation, like "$n + 1$." For any number in the series, the cause of its existence is its successor and the successor relation, so the cause of -1 is -2 and $n + 1$, the cause of 0 is -1 and $n + 1$, the cause 1 is 0 and $n + 1$, and so on ad infinitum. In this case, since every member in the series has a cause, namely, its successor and the successor relation, the whole series has a cause. For al-Rāzī, this situation equally applies to an infinite temporal series of possible existents. Every individual in the series has a cause, namely, the temporally prior agent, and at no point does one need to appeal to something outside of the series, that is, to a Necessary Existent in itself, to explain the series. Al-Rāzī has leveled a formidable challenge against Avicenna; for Avicenna not only wants to show that there is a deity, but also that that deity is the cause of a cosmos that has existed infinitely into the past. If al-Rāzī is correct, then both Avicennan theses cannot be necessarily true.

Al-Ṭūsī, who defends Avicenna's position concerning the age of the world, complains that al-Rāzī's objection is more verbal than real. What al-Rāzī fails to appreciate is that the argument is about the *whole* series considered as a whole, not about *each one* of the members. So, return to the example of the number line. Now imagine that al-Ṭūsī asks al-Rāzī, "What is the cause of the whole series?" Presumably al-Rāzī would say something like, "Each individual number employs the successor relation to generate a new number, and then that new number employs the successor relation and so on, such that each member, and so the whole, is caused to exist." Al-Ṭūsī would be right to observe, then, that the real cause of the whole series is the successor relation, and not merely each number in the series. Yet the successor relation is distinct from the numbers that make up the series, for it is not itself a number; rather, it is something distinct from the number series.

Similarly, some possible-existent$_1$ may stand in a causal relation to another possible-existent$_2$, but the issue is not merely about the possible existents themselves, but about the causal relation that exists between them. What explains possible-existent$_1$'s *causing* possible-existent$_2$? The causal relation must be simultaneous with the causing, and so it is only by understanding what accounts for the very existence of the causal relation itself, when it is causing, that one fully explains the existence of the series of possible existents, whether finite or infinite, considered as a *whole*. Hence, the cause of the possible existents' causal relation, that is, of their causality, is essentially ordered to that causality, and, as al-Rāzī himself conceded, Avicenna's argument works when framed in terms of essentially ordered, as opposed to temporally ordered, causes.

In short, option (2), that is, there is an infinite causal series, still entails the need of something necessary in itself. Moreover, given the understanding of the cause of the *whole* series, one can see why (3), circular causation, will fare no better. For a circular causal series of possible existents, that is, effects, would consist of a finite number of members, the whole of which still needs a cause for their causality (IV.15). All options terminate at a Necessary Existent in itself, QED.

The remainder of this *namaṭ* (IV.16–27) addresses the issue of the Necessary Existent's uniqueness (*tawaḥḥud*) and unity (*tawḥīd*). The aim is to show that, in every possible sense, the Necessary Existent is simple, whether with respect to essence/existence, matter/form, genus/difference, contraries, or the like. These sections are rich, and I can hope only to give one a taste of them.

One of the first issues canvassed is the real difference between essence and existence. Al-Ṭūsī writes of it:

> There is a difference between existence and the rest of the attributes here. The rest of the attributes exist only because of the essence, whereas the essence exists because of the existence. Because of that the procession of the rest of the attributes from the essence is possible as well as the procession of some of [the attributes] from others, whereas it is impossible that the procession of existence is from any of them. (IV.17, 30 [570–71])

What follow are eight objections by al-Rāzī and al-Ṭūsī's responses. Here is a sample. According to al-Ṭūsī, al-Rāzī reads Avicenna as saying that existence is accidental to essence:

> Since [al-Rāzī] thought the existence of possible things is something accidental to their essences and he had judged that the existence of what is necessary is univocal with (*musāwin*, lit. equal to) the existence of possible things, he judged that the existence of what is necessary is also accidental to its essence, and so its essence is other than its existence. (IV.17, 30 [571])

The gist of al-Rāzī's first objection is that either existence is said univocally or equivocally of God and creatures. If univocally, then God's existence is accidental to his essence, for existence is accidental to possible existents. If existence is said equivocally, then there is an existence that stands over God, presumably because there would be a generic existence that is divided into two species, namely, necessary and possible existence. In either case, there is composition in the divinity.

Al-Ṭūsī's response is to distinguish among being said univocally, equivocally, and analogically, or by modulation (*tashkīk*). For al-Ṭūsī, while existence is not a purely univocal term, neither is it a purely equivocal one either. Instead, existence is used analogically, which might refer (1) to a priority and posteriority relation, as of causes and effects, (2) to what is primary, as the indivisible unit is to multiplicity, and (3) to intensity and remission, as of shades of the same color. All three of these ways apply to both possible and necessary existence.

Bearing this use of analogical or modular predication in mind, one can address al-Rāzī's complaint; for in Avicenna's modal ontology there is a sense that whatever is actual or present has some manner of necessary existence. Yet in most existents, this necessary existence is (ontologically or temporally) posterior to the possibility of their existing, and so what presently exists must be made necessary through another. In the Necessary Existent through itself, however, there is no possibility, so its existence is prior to all other existents and is the cause of the others' existence. Existence, concludes al-Ṭūsī, is said analogically of all existing things, albeit, some exist prior, some primarily and some more intensely than others.

The issue of individuation (*taʿayyun*) is also taken up in the discussion surrounding divine simplicity (IV.18–20). Inasmuch as anything is a cause—and the Necessary Existent has been shown to be that—that thing must be individuated. Now the individuation of the Necessary Existent is either (1) owing to its being the Necessary Existent and nothing else or (2) owing to another. All permutations of (2) are absurd. The general argument (IV.18) is that if the Necessary Existent had any parts, those parts would stand to the whole Necessary Existent as causes, but the Necessary Existent is wholly uncaused. Therefore, the Necessary Existent must be individuated owing to the very thing it is, namely, by being *the* Necessary Existent thought itself.

Al-Rāzī offers another series of complaints against this proof. For example, observes al-Rāzī (IV.18, 40 [584–85]), Avicenna based his argument upon the necessity of existence (*wujūb al-wujūd*) being affirmed of the Necessary Existent. The necessity of existence, however, is either a necessary concomitant or an accident; otherwise it would be a negation. Whether the Necessary Existent has its necessity of existence as a necessary property or an accidental property, it *has some property*. Therefore, the very basis of Avicenna's proof is undermined, for there is the Necessary Existent *and* its property of the necessity of existence.

Al-Ṭūsī responds that necessity (*wujūb*), possibility, and impossibility are intensional attributes of the intellect (*awṣāf iʿtibāriyya ʿaqliyya*). Affirmation and negation hold only of these intensional attributes. Avicenna, in contrast, is *not* concerned with *wujūb al-wujūd*, that is, the attribute of being necessary, but with *wājib al-wujūd*, that is, that entity that is necessary through itself. In general, al-Ṭūsī complains that all of al-Rāzī's objections result from his insistence that the existence of the Necessary Existent is equivalent to the existence of what is merely possible, and thereby making existence an accident of the essence.

The general argument against the Necessary Existent's being a composite has been given. If the Necessary Existent had parts in any way, the parts would stand to the whole as causes to an effect. Since the Necessary Existent is wholly uncaused and indeed is the Cause of causes, it cannot have parts. Thus, the Necessary Existent is not a composite of essence and existence (IV.22); it does not have a body (IV. 23); it does not share anything in common with other things that would require that it have a differentiating factor; it is not composed of genus and difference (IV.25); and it has no contrary (IV.26). Moreover, since the Necessary Existent is immaterial, it must be an intellect, which has itself as the object of intellect, and so is Thought Thinking itself (IV.28).

15.3.2. Cosmology

Its having been shown that there is a divinity who is absolutely simple, the next chapter (*namaṭ* V) treats the divinity's relation to the created order and the vexed issue of the age of the world. Sections V.1–3 consider various terms and locutions associated with creation. To begin, many fancy that whether one speaks of "action" (*fiʿl*), "production" (*ṣanʿ*), or "creation" (*ibdāʿ*), the effect (*mafʿūl*) requires its agent in the same way regardless. The presumption is that the effect of the agent comes to exist only after not having existed. In other words, the common opinion is that the agent only temporally creates (*iḥdāth*) its effect. Additionally, it is commonly held that once the agent has acted, the effect no longer needs the agent and can continue to exist without it.

Al-Ṭūsī complains (V.2) that a number of the key elements in this subject, such as "effect" and "what (temporally) comes to be," are frequently left vague. There is no assessment of whether the terms are equivalent or one is more general or more specific than the other. In other words, these concepts are considered without taking note of whether something extra has been added to a base concept. For example, the *mutakallimūn* apply the term "action" only to what comes to be through the will or choice of an agent. Avicenna complains that if the *mutakallimūn* were correct, then normal uses of the concept "action" would involve either a contradiction or a redundancy. For example, if the effect must be by choice, as opposed to by nature, the seemingly cogent expression "an action by nature," that is, of the nonchoice sort, would involve a contradiction, and the expression "an action of the choice sort" would be like saying "a human of the animal sort," as if there were humans who are nonanimals. Al-Rāzī complains that the entire argument is based upon the oddities of language, whereas al-Ṭūsī insists that Avicenna's concern is not merely a verbal quibble, for despite differences among "production," "action," and "causing to exist," they all are alike in being an action. The other notions—production, (temporal) creation, (atemporal) creation, and the like—include some additional consideration.

"Action" is commonly identified with "the occurrence of (some) existence after privation as the result of some cause" (V.2, 63 [639–40]). Al-Ṭūsī notes that of the three key elements in the account—existence, privation, and to exist *after privation*—neither "privation" nor "to exist *after privation*" is associated with the agent. Thus it remains that only the existence that is brought about or occurs is associated with action. The issue, then, is whether this occurrent existence is associated with what is possible in itself but necessary through another *or* with what (temporally) comes to be after a privation.

To put the lie to the common opinion (V.3), al-Ṭūsī argues that what is possible in itself but necessary through another is more general than what (temporally) comes to be after not existing. That is because what is possible in itself but necessary through another can conceptually be divided into (1) what is not preceded by privation—and so is necessary through another always—and (2) what is preceded by privation—and so becomes necessary through another at a certain time. What is necessary through another while possible in itself must be the more generic notion, since it includes, as one of its subspecies, what is preceded by privation.

This conclusion is, next, coupled with the premise that whenever some property F (e.g., being associated with another) is predicated of two accounts, then F belongs primarily and essentially to whichever of the two is more general, while belonging to the more specific account after and because of the more general one. For example, being mortal holds of both animals and humans; however, it holds of humans precisely because mortality holds of animals more generally. Similarly, being associated with another belongs primarily and essentially to what is possible in itself but necessary through another, while it belongs to what precedes privation only secondarily and because of the former.

From this same argument, al-Ṭūsī also establishes that what is necessary through another must always be associated with another and not merely at its inception, as the common opinion holds. For the necessary through another does not, after it comes to be, cease being necessary through another such that it would become necessary through itself. It still remains only and ever necessary *through another* as long as it exists. Hence the common man's opinion must be wrong: Something other must always (ontologically) precede the effect at every moment of that effect's existence, and so that effect, inasmuch as it is necessary through another, cannot dispense with its agent after it comes to be.

Al-Rāzī complains that the philosophers' analysis of the association between cause and effect imposes necessity on God (V.3, 69–71 [646–48]). The theologians say that the divine creative act must be by choice, which requires that the world did not exist and then God willed it into existence at some particularly moment, whereas the philosophers say that an eternal agent must necessarily create eternally.

This objection cuts both ways, notes al-Ṭūsī. If the theologians are correct, then it is necessary for God to create temporally, and so God has no choice about that. Furthermore, strictly speaking the philosophers do *not* believe that an eternal action precludes an agent's choosing. God could have chosen not to create at all. Instead, al-Ṭūsī tells us, the philosophers hold that it is impossible for an eternal action to proceed from anything less than an eternal agent complete in agency and that it is impossible for the action of an eternal agent complete in agency not to be itself eternal. The philosophers do *not* believe that the First Cause does not act by choice but that its choice and power are not distinct things. Consequently, its agency is not like the choice of certain higher animals, but neither is it like natural bodies that are necessitated.

The next sections, V.4–6, take up two analogous arguments that attempt to show that whatever temporally comes to be must already be preceded by something in the created order, namely, by time and matter. If either of these arguments is successful, the past eternity of the world is proven. That is because for any moment one posits as the *first moment* of creation, there would have been a preceding moment when time and/or matter were already created. In short, there would have been a creation before the first creation, a blatant absurdity.

That time must precede whatever comes to exist after it did not exist is argued thus (V.4): Whatever comes to exist *after* not having existed must obviously involve some *after*. *After*, however, is a relative notion. To say, "*x* is *after*" is incomplete; there must be some *y* relative to which *x* is *after*, such that *x* is *after y*. Correspondingly, *y* is *before x*. Moreover, this *before* state must have passed away so that it does not exist together with the *after* state. This *before* state cannot merely be privation, since privation is also associated with the *after* state, and again the *before* state is not identical with the *after* state. For example, when a tomato ripens, greenness existed *before* the redness in the tomato, and so *before* is associated with a privation, namely, a privation of redness; but when the tomato is ripe, redness is *after* the greenness, and so *after* is now associated with a privation, namely, a privation of greenness. Similarly, the *before* cannot be identified with the agent, since the agent too can exist *before* or *after* as well as *simultaneous with* what comes to exist. Thus, there is something else that is renewed and elapses and as such that thing is essentially a nonstable existent, which al-Ṭūsī explicitly identifies with time. To sum up, whatever comes to be *after* not having existed requires some moment, corresponding with a *before* state, that precedes the first moment of that thing's coming to be. In short, whatever temporally comes to be is preceded by time.

While most of the foregoing discussion mirrors Avicenna's own, al-Ṭūsī adds:

> The *beforeness* and *afterness* that attach to time are two relations that exist only in the intellect because the two parts of time to which the *beforeness* and *afterness* attach do not exist simultaneously. Thus the relation of attachment to them does not exist. Their being established in the intellect, however, is owing to something that indicates the existence of their presence, which is time simultaneous with that thing. (V.4, 72–73 [651–52])

The fact that for al-Ṭūsī time is an intensional object allows him to deflect a series of objections that al-Rāzī raises (V.4, 73–75 [752–55]). Indeed all of al-Rāzī's objections are based upon the assumption that the relation between the states of *beforeness* and *afterness* exists in the external world, and almost all of those objections want to show that Avicenna's account entails an infinite regress of externally existing times. For al-Ṭūsī, however, while it is true that any external and particular *after*-state necessitates an external and particular *before*-state, the relation between those two states—where that relation just is time—only subsists in the mind. If time is an intensional object, al-Ṭūsī has blocked al-Rāzī's regress or at least rendered it no longer vicious; for the purported series of times is not an externally existing actual infinity of causally interdependent times.

Having treated time, the *Ishārāt* next treats matter and subject (*mawḍūʿ*) (V.6). The argument begins by noting that whatever temporally comes to be must have been possible before it came to be. In other words, possible existence precedes whatever temporally comes to be. An analysis of this preceding possible existence ensues. First, this possible existence cannot be, as certain *mutakallimūn* believed, merely the power (*qudra*) of an agent to bring about the effect. For an agent has the power to make something come to be only if that thing is already possible in itself, for if it is impossible, then no power whatsoever could produce it. Thus:

(1) An agent has the power to make *x* come to be only if *x is possible*.

Claim (1) seems meaningful and substantive and in principle falsifiable. Yet if one assumes with the *mutakallimūn* that "*x* is possible" just means "an agent has the power to make *x* come to be," the claim in fact is vacuous; for it comes down to nothing more than:

(1') An agent has the power to make *x* come to be only if *an agent has the power to make x come to be*.

A more robust analysis of the possible is needed.

According to al-Ṭūsī the possible is not something intelligible considered merely in itself; rather, it is only ever understood in relation to some existence, namely, what will exist under the right condition. In other words, there is nothing that is just *the possible*, full stop. There is only ever the possibility *of something's existing* or *for something to come to be*. So, for example, there is the possible relative to the existence of white or relative to a body's becoming white. What is possible, thus, must be something relational (*amr iḍāfī*). Relations, however, are accidents, and accidents exist only in what underlies them. In other words, the possible inasmuch as it is relational requires some subject or matter in which to inhere.

Additionally, al-Ṭūsī observes that the abstract notion of possibility (*imkān*) is something that follows upon the essence of some possible existent when that essence is abstracted from the particular existence and from the privation that is relative to its existence (V.6, 81 [663]). The same also holds for the abstract notions of necessity (*wujūb*) and impossibility (*imtināʿ*). In other words, modal notions like possibility and necessity are intensional objects, albeit, related to something external, namely, possible existents in themselves or necessary existents, whether necessary through itself or through another.

This last point is important, since it provides al-Ṭūsī the means to deflect a number of criticisms that al-Rāzī levels against Avicenna. For example, al-Rāzī complains that if possibility were an existent, it must either be something necessary or possible (V.6, 81–82 [663–64]). The first horn is absurd, since what is necessary describes something other than what is possible. The second horn, continues al-Rāzī, is likewise absurd, since it would require a possibility for the possibility, and so on ad infinitum. Al-Ṭūsī's response is to take seriously the notion that possibility in itself is an intensional object in relation to something external. So inasmuch as possibility's association or relation to something external is not itself some external existent but is only a judgment in the intellect, there is possibility. Still, the very possibility of some external existence and the association of that possibility to something external do indicate the existence of that external thing, and that external thing is nothing other than the subject or matter for what exists possibly. As earlier with al-Rāzī's criticism of time, if possibility is an intensional object, as al-Ṭūsī claims, then he believes that he has blocked al-Rāzī's regress or at least rendered it innocuous; for the purported causal series of possibilities is not some externally existing, actual infinity such that the members are all simultaneously causally dependent upon one another.

Again both the analysis of time and of matter-cum-possible underlie arguments for the cosmos's past eternity based on the nature of the effect, namely, what comes to be after not being. In general the argument is that whatever comes to be after not being must be preceded by time and by matter qua subject of possibility. If there were any purported first moment of creation, when ostensibly nothing but God exists, then something other than God, namely, time and matter, would also exist. It is clearly a contradiction to say that there is nothing but God and yet something other than God exists. Hence, the initial assumption that gave rise to the contradiction—namely, there is a first moment in the finite past before which there was nothing but God—must be rejected.

Having provided arguments for the world's past eternity based upon the nature of the effect, the focus changes to an argument for that thesis based upon the cause of the cosmos (V.7–10). The argument in outline proceeds by first identifying the different types of priority-posteriority relations and showing that whatever is possible in itself but necessary through another is related to that other as something essentially posterior; that is, it is essentially dependent upon its cause and ceases to exit should the cause cease to exist (V.7). Second, the issue of the complete cause (*ʿilla tāmma*) follows (V.8), wherein it is shown that when all causal factors are present, the effect must be necessitated and, conversely, if the effect is not necessitated, then all the causal factors could not have been present. In short, in a complete cause there is a preponderance that necessitates its effect (V.10). Let us consider each step now in a more detail.

According to al-Rāzī, the aim of V.7 is to define and establish what an effect is. Against both al-Rāzī's interpretation and the common assumption that being temporally prior is a condition for the existence of something's being a cause, al-Ṭūsī insists that Avicenna's intent is to explain that an effect need not be temporally separate from its cause, and indeed in cases of essential priority and posteriority, an effect must exist simultaneously with its cause. Priority and posteriority are spoken of in five ways: (1) in time, (2) in ordering/position, (3) in nobility, (4) in nature, and (5) in cause and effect. The last two cases both involve essential priority and posteriority: x is essentially prior to y just in case x can exist without y but not conversely. An example of being prior by nature is the relation between the unit and multiplicity; for while the unit can exist without multiplicity, multiplicity, that is, a collection of units, cannot exist without the unit. Similarly for (5), the turning of the key is, for example, an essential effect of the motion of the hand;

for while the hand can make a turning motion while not holding a key, the key cannot move unless the hand turns it.

When what is possible in itself is necessitated through another—that is to say, becomes actually present—its coming to be so must involve essential coming to be (*ḥudūth dhātī*) (V.7, 88–90 [671–73]). The argument runs thus: Whatever belongs to something essentially cannot be removed simply by the removal of another. Now what the possible in itself but necessary through another has from another is precisely its necessity, that is, its being present or actual. (As for when the possible is considered in the intellect—as opposed to in concrete particulars—its existence and privation are just the existence and privation of its cause, and the cause is other than the possible in itself.) Consequently, when the possible is considered merely in itself, abstracted from any other, all that belongs to it is either privation (*ʿadam*), that is, some relative absence, or nonexistence itself (*lā wujūd*). Hence the present and actual existence of anything possible in itself must belong to it as an essential effect of some other, and so the coming to be actual and present of what is possible is an essential coming to be. Al-Rāzī wants to resist this conclusion by arguing that if what is possible did not exist in some way prior to its coming to be, it would have been impossible; for there would have been no possibility of its coming to be. In now what is becoming a standard move, al-Ṭūsī deflects the criticism, claiming it arises from al-Rāzī's failure to appreciate that the essence abstracted from all considerations does not perdure extramentally but is an intensional object.

The next issue is that effects do not lag behind their complete cause (V.8). Among the various factors that go into a complete causal nexus are the following: natures, wills, and souls, which are internal causes. Additional factors include tools, auxiliary causes, a motive (*dāʿiya*)—which al-Ṭūsī says is other than volition—matter, time, and even certain privative factors such as the removal of an obstacle. Any time an agent exists and there is no obstacle to its producing its effect, and yet one or more of the other factors is missing, the agent's effect does not exist. Conversely, when no factor relevant to the efficaciousness of the agent's causality is missing, the effect necessarily exists. That is because only the nonexistent factor prevented the existence of the effect. As a corollary, whenever there (1) is some complete cause, *x*, that has no first or last moment of its existence, and (2) *x* is unchanging in all respects—that is, neither having a state that is renewed nor passes away—and (3) *x* has some effect, then *x* will always (*daʾiman*) necessitate the existence of its effect.

Quickly to sum up the present argument, whatever is necessary through another while possible in itself stands to its cause as something essentially posterior. In other words, its existence is dependent upon its cause at every moment that it exists, and not merely at its inception. Moreover, in those cases where a complete cause exists, the effect is necessitated and cannot but occur. Consequently, if a complete cause exists at all times, that is, there is no first nor last moment of its existence, and it is wholly unchanging, that is, it does not lose or gain some factor relevant to its causality, then its effect is necessitated and so exists at all times. God, of course, is just such a complete cause, and so the effect of divine causality must exist always.

While it is tempting to identify this effect with the cosmos itself, such a conclusion is not strictly speaking accurate, although there is another sense in which it is correct. It is incorrect inasmuch as the cosmos is a multiplicity made up of a number of different possible existents, whereas God, as will be seen, is the proximate cause of only a single effect. Still, from this First Effect there is a cascade of other effects, which as a whole do make up the cosmos, and God is most decidedly the remote cause of all of those effects and so ultimately of the cosmos itself.

The claim that God is the cause of a single effect is intimately linked with the idea of the Real or True One (*wāḥid ḥaqīqī*) (V.11). Al-Ṭūsī himself considers it virtually self-evident that the Real or True One, inasmuch as it is one, only necessitates numerically one thing. Still, he also recognizes that many resist such a claim, but only because they do not properly understand the meaning of "True One." To motivate this claim al-Ṭūsī has his reader assume that something, *x*, is truly one. Next he notes that there is a difference between the two concepts

(1) *x* necessitates F; and
(2) *x* necessitates G,

where F and G are not identical. The difference between the two is that *x*'s causality relative to F is other than *x*'s causality relative to G; for a cause is in part understood in terms of its effect, and the very fact that F and G are different effects implies different causal features in *x*. This difference, thus, indicates a difference in the true nature (*ḥaqīqa*) of *x*. Consequently, *x* is not one thing but two or at least one thing described by two different attributes, but the initial supposition was that *x* was one, and so there is a contradiction.

This argument, in addition to explaining the sense of "true one," al-Ṭūsī continues, also makes clear that two distinct modes of causality cannot belong to the Real or True One, for these modes of causality either remain within the True One, and so are its constitutive elements, or they go out from the True One, and are its necessary concomitants. If the two distinct modes of causality are necessary concomitants of the True One, then those concomitants would be related to the True One as F and G were related to *x* in the previous example. F and G, however, were related to *x* as either constitutive elements or necessary concomitants, and so the discussion returns to the beginning and one is in an infinite regress. If the two modes of causality are constitutive elements of the True One, then the True One is not absolutely simple, in which case it is not really and truly one, but it is really and truly one, so there is a contradiction. Thus, the argument concludes: From the True One only one proceeds.

Al-Rāzī objects that based upon this analysis it would follow that for some single subject (*al-wāḥid*), *s*, only one thing is denied of *s* or describes *s* or is received by *s*. Yet on all accounts such a claim is wrong. To see why, let *s* be *this single man*. Clearly multiple things are denied of *s: s* is not a rock and is not a tree. Or again *s* can be described in multiple ways, as *s* is standing and is sitting. Likewise *s* is receptive to multiple things: *s* is white and is moving. Al-Ṭūsī responds that al-Rāzī's entire analysis presupposes that multiple things already exist: the single subject and additionally all the properties denied of, describing, or received by *s*. When one is considering the True One qua cause of the existence of everything else, and so as essentially prior to the existence of anything else, these additional things can, for the sake of analysis, be considered as nonexistent; for inasmuch as the True One is one and an absolutely single entity, it does not entail anything else. The problem with al-Rāzī's criticism, notes al-Ṭūsī, is that it equivocates on the key notion of (divine) procession (*ṣudūr*), for procession can be said in two ways. One is a relative notion, as when one considers the cause relative to the effect, and so simultaneously considers procession to be *the pouring forth* (act) of *things* (effect). The other sense of procession is the mere act, namely, *pouring forth*. Al-Rāzī's criticism fails, al-Ṭūsī tells us, because Avicenna's discussion is about the divine procession itself, whereas al-Rāzī latches onto the things that are the result of the procession.

Namaṭ V concludes with the various schools concerning the necessitation of possible existents and the duration of the world (V.12). In broad strokes the various schools can be divided into two: those who say that there are more than one Necessary Existent through itself and those who say there can be only one such entity. Those who say that there is more than one Necessary Existent through itself, like various materialists, the Harranians and Zoroastrians, all fall prey to the demonstration of *namaṭ* IV that the Necessary Existent through itself must be one and simple. As for the schools of thought claiming that there is only one Necessary Existent, they divide into two groups: the theologians and the (majority of) philosophers. The theologians—among whom al-Ṭūsī mentions the Muʿtazilites, Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/931) and his followers, and the Ashʿarites—insist that nonexistence must temporally precede whatever the Necessary Existent creates. In contrast, the philosophers maintain that not only is the Necessary Existent the ultimate cause of those things that are temporally preceded by nonexistence, but also it can create what nonexistence only essentially (but not temporally) precedes. In other words, for the philosophers, the Necessary Existent can create something ex nihilo, that is, from nonbeing, eternally.

The philosophers object to the theologians' position by noting that it is faced with the following dilemma. If the theologians were correct, the Necessary Existent's will to create at the first moment it purportedly does would be something either (1) that temporally came to be after not having been or (2) that is eternal. Against (1), al-Ṭūsī notes among other considerations that if the divine will came to exist after not having existed, an aspect of the Necessary Existent, namely, its will, would not be necessary but possible; however, the Necessary Existent in itself is necessary in every respect. In the case of alternative (2), namely that the divine will is eternal, the Necessary Existent remains single, continuous, and unchanging with respect to its will. Thus, either no action proceeds from it ever, which is clearly false, or whatever action that does proceed from it does so at every moment of the divinity's existence. Therefore, since the Necessary Existent is eternal, the creation that proceeds from it is eternal, albeit eternally dependent upon the Necessary Existent as its cause.

The remaining subsections of *namaṭ* V.12 show the weakness of the theologians' proofs for a temporal creation. Before al-Ṭūsī turns to them individually, however, there is a general criticism of the theologians' strategy (V.12, 112–13 [700–701]), for their arguments can be divided into two types: those that are associated with the *agent* and its necessitating an action and those that are associated with the *action* and the impossibility of atemporal actions. Al-Ṭūsī reviles the first sort of argument, since it verges on heresy, for it impugns either the divine goodness and generosity (since there would be a time when God does not want to create) or God's omnipotence (since there would be a time when God cannot create). As for the second sort of argument, namely that it is impossible for an action not to be something that temporally comes to be, he refers the reader back to the earlier discussion that an effect can exist always (V.3 and 8).

As for the theologians' specific arguments against the philosophers, three are presented and all involve paradoxes associated with infinity. One of the theologians' arguments for the temporal creation of the cosmos should provide a taste of their argumentative style and the philosophers' response (V.12 115–15 [702–3]). The argument has one assume along with the philosophers that there has been a past infinity of events. If that were the case, then the past infinity of temporal events has a termination, namely, at the present. It is, however, impossible for the infinite to be terminated, that is, to be traversed completely, and yet this is just what the philosophers' position entails. Thus the assumption that led to this conclusion, namely that there has been a past infinity of temporal events, must be false.

The resolution of the objection involves an analysis of the premise, "It is impossible for the infinite to be terminated," for such a claim can be understood in at least two ways. First, it might mean that it is impossible for the present moment to be a termination for each and every moment (*kull waqtin*) in an infinite past. Understood in this way, the premise is simply false; for between the present moment and each and any past moment that one might posit there is only a finite extent or duration. Consequently, on this reading the infinite has not been terminated, but only a finite magnitude has been terminated. Second, the premise might mean that it is impossible for the whole of a (past) infinity to terminate at the present moment. Taken in this sense the theologians' premise simply begs the question. For the philosophers' position precisely is that the whole of the past infinite number of events has reached the present moment, and to say that that is impossible because it is impossible is not much of an argument.

Al-Ṭūsī closes the *Ishārāt*'s chapter on production and creation with these words:

> What [Avicenna] intends is that the conflict about the eternity or temporal origination of the world is easy in comparison with the conflict about the unity or multiplicity of the Necessary Existent, for this latter issue is not to be compromised just for ease. He does not intend that the issues of temporal origination and eternity depend upon the issue of unity. (V.12, 117 [703])

15.4. METAETHICS AND BEYOND

While the above concludes the discussion of "metaphysics proper," a few words should be said about al-Ṭūsī's understanding of the remainder of the *Ishārāt*, for it highlights his and al-Rāzī's vastly different understandings of the text, while also bringing to its denouement al-Ṭūsī's use of the Priority Principle in his critique of al-Rāzī. The tension comes to a head in *namaṭ* VI, "On Ends and Their Principles and on Order." Both Rāzī and Ṭūsī preface the *namaṭ* by situating it within the larger framework of the *Ishārāt* (VI, preface, 117–18 [707–8]).

According to al-Rāzī, *namaṭ* VI has three aims: (1) explain how every agent acting by intention or volition is perfected by its act; (2) establish the intellects, that is, the separate immaterial substances in addition to the human soul; and (3) explain the order of existence. Al-Rāzī further claims, however, that the *namaṭ* is driven by Avicenna's doctrine of the eternity of creation and his belief that for Avicenna the inhabitants of the sublunar realm, that is, the creatures of the earth, are not governed by providence, both positions that appear repugnant to traditional Islam.

Al-Ṭūsī, in contrast, situates the *nimāṭ* differently. For him, since in *namaṭ* IV, Avicenna had proven the existence of the Necessary Existent, he needed to show the manner of its causality, which he did in *namaṭ*, V. While discussing divine causality, he had also introduced the notion of action. Consequently, according to al-Ṭūsī, he must now explain the various ends of actions (where the "ends of actions" under consideration are those actions whose ends are certain goods that improve the agent). Two universal claims concerning actions, maintains al-Ṭūsī, must be addressed: first, which volitional agents have actions that *do not* have (self-improving) ends (namely, the higher principles) and, second, which volitional agents have actions that *do* have (self-improving) ends (namely, sublunar or human agents).

Given the two distinct kinds of agents—again, ones that do not act for (self-improving) ends and ones that do—there is an ordering of existents. Hence, continues al-Ṭūsī, a complete discussion of those existents requires a discussion of the ordering of existence descending from the First Principle down to the lowest level. *Namaṭ* VI focuses exclusively on divine and angelic agency, namely, on agents that act without doing so for an external (self-improving) end or purpose, whereas *namaṭ* VII, "On Abstraction," turns to human agency. In *namaṭ* VII, al-Ṭūsī begins by explaining why Avicenna treated existents in the order that he did. Drawing upon Avicenna's own words, al-Ṭūsī notes that the discussion of existence has been arranged according to the "priority of nobility," a point that al-Rāzī fails to grasp.

Content-wise *namaṭ* VII treats the state of the human soul separated from the body, with a particular emphasis on the difference between the essential perfections that survive with the soul and the bodily perfections that do not survive with the death of the body. In other words, the focus of the *namaṭ* is on intellectual "perception," which can be both a means to an end, namely, moral and right actions, and an end desired for its own sake, which occurs most completely in the beatific vision. The last three *nimāṭ* are on right actions and the ethical and religious motions or actions that we can take as a means toward attaining our proper end and perfection. Unlike intellectual perception, however, which can be an end desired simply for its own sake, these moral "motions" are only ever means to our proper end as human, namely, happiness. The last four *nimāt*, then, exactly parallel the organizational structure of the earlier psychological discussion from *namaṭ* III.7. The only difference is that now the discussion proceeds at the level of metaphysics and metaethics: accounts of intellectual perception are followed by accounts of ethical motions or actions, precisely because the former is nobler than the latter, and so prior.

If al-Ṭūsī is correct, the *Ishārāt*, far from being an irreligious book, as many thought, is a highly religious work. For the shift to action theory and metaethics provides the philosophical basis for the applied ethics of the *Ishārāt*'s final sections. Moreover, the ethical mores that are elaborated there just are the Five Pillars of Islam: the *Shahāda*, five daily prayers, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage. Also in these *nimāṭ*, if one takes al-Ṭūsī seriously, Avicenna provides a metaphysical, or naturalized, framework for understanding other traditional Islamic religious practices such as the stations of the knower or mystic (*maqāmāt al-ʿārif*). Given that Islam is more like Judaism than Christianity in its preference for orthopraxy over orthodoxy, the *Ishārāt*'s substantiation of Islamic legal practices, at least as al-Ṭūsī reads the *Ishārāt*, would have made it an important work in Islamic philosophical theology.

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CHAPTER 16

KĀTIBĪ (D. 1277), TAḤTĀNĪ (D. 1365), AND THE *SHAMSIYYA*

TONY STREET

The Epistle for Shams al-Dīn on the Rules of Logic—for short, the *Shamsiyya*—is a remarkable book.[1] It is one of the most widely read logic texts of all time. Written sometime after 1262 by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 675/1277), it attained immediate celebrity that it continues to enjoy down to today. It has been widely taught in madrasas, especially in the arc of Muslim countries running from Egypt through to India. So popular did it become, it effectively replaced the volume on logic in Avicenna's *Pointers and Reminders* (*al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*) (normally read with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Solution to the Problems of Pointers*);[2] most manuscripts of *Pointers* and *Solution* copied after 1400 no longer contain the logic section. Ultimately, as we shall see, even specialists in logic began to look on *Shamsiyya* logic as Avicenna's logic.

The *Shamsiyya* is a compact text, just over twelve thousand words in English translation, and deals with aspects of the philosophy of language and modal syllogistic. In spite of its brevity, the *Shamsiyya* covers a lot of ground. Few people in the past read it without a teacher, and no one would wisely think of reading it now without a commentary. The commentary with which it was most commonly read was written by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥtānī (d. 766/1365) in 1329, the *Redaction of the Rules of Logic in Commentary on the Epistle for Shams al-Dīn*. The *Redaction* is a classic in itself; indeed, the supercommentaries on it outnumber the commentaries on the *Shamsiyya* (Wisnovsky 2004, 163–65). Together, the *Shamsiyya* and Taḥtānī's commentary represent the level of logical training most Muslim scholars over the centuries have aspired to attain in the course of their education.

The *Shamsiyya* is a teaching text, the *Redaction* a commentary; both were written after the Mongols sacked Baghdad in 1258. I think the prejudice against books written after the fall of Baghdad has finally been abandoned; so too the prejudice against commentaries as merely derivative. We remain unreformed, however, as to the true status of teaching texts. There is nothing necessarily derivative or uninteresting about such texts, nor—and this would be a perilous assumption with which to appraise much of the work done in Kātibī's Marāgha—is an efflorescence of textbook writing indicative of a tradition in decline. The *Shamsiyya* is a classic precisely because it is so well suited to introducing students to a maze of logical innovations that—in the third quarter of the thirteenth century—had only just crystallized in a discipline going through upheaval and renewal.

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[1] Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* (1948) contains the text of the *Shamsiyya* I have used; it also contains Taḥtānī's *Redaction*.

[2] Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*; I check this version against MS British Library Or. 10901.

In what follows, I say a few words about Kātibī and his working circumstances; I say even fewer about Taḥtānī. I go on to reflect on the *Shamsiyya*, its structure, contents, and the broader project it forms part of. In the third section I consider two of Kātibī's logical proofs. I then concentrate on a short but significant section of the text (3 of the text's 120 lemmata) to show how immediately preceding discussions led Kātibī to write what we find in the *Shamsiyya*. Throughout, I draw on material from Taḥtānī's commentary to illustrate the nature of that work. In conclusion, I glance at the career of the *Shamsiyya* and its logical doctrine in the centuries after Kātibī's death.

The chapter has two appendices. One is a table of the *Shamsiyya*'s contents. The second is a concordance (table 16.1) to help navigate between the Arabic of the *Shamsiyya*, its English translation, and my numbering of the lemmata.

16.1. KĀTIBĪ AND THE MARĀGHA PROJECT

The author of the *Shamsiyya*, Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (in Persian "Dabīrān") al-Qazwīnī, was born in Qazwīn early in the thirteenth century. He was trained by Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1265), a philosopher and theologian whose logic has yet to be studied properly.[3] There is manuscript evidence that, in 1228 and 1229, Kātibī was reading Abharī's texts under Abharī's supervision (Eichner 2012, 130). Abharī had trained other scholars, among them Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274).[4] Abharī, Kātibī, and Ṭūsī are certainly among the greatest logicians of the thirteenth century. The trajectory of their logical commitments is particularly interesting. Abharī comes across in much of what he wrote as a faithful Avicennan, though at a certain point he began to explore new paths in logic, especially in his *Revelation of Thoughts*.[5] By contrast, Ṭūsī remained unwavering in his commitment to Avicennan logic, and was to write, after Abharī died, a respectful but uncompromising critique of the *Revelation*. There is no indication Kātibī was ever concerned to defend Avicenna's logic, though he had surely read through *Pointers* with Abharī, and understood the arguments for and against Avicenna's positions. It becomes clear in section 16.4 below that he was intimately acquainted with at least some of the arguments in and against the *Revelation*.

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[3] Thom 2010 makes it clear how sophisticated Abharī is as a logician.

[4] That is, Ṭūsī read *Pointers and Reminders* under Abharī; Endress 2006, 411.

[5] *Tanzīl al-afkār*, published with Ṭūsī's critique, *Taʿdīl al-miʿyār fī naqd Tanzīl al-afkār:* Ṭūsī, *Taʿdīl.*

Kātibī's other works on logic include an advanced text written after 1265, the *Summa of Subtle Points*,[6] a commentary on the *Epitome* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), and a commentary on the *Disclosure of Secrets*, a logic text by the Ayyūbid jurist Afḍal al-Dīn al-Khūnajī (d. 646/1248).[7] The *Disclosure* may have been written as early as the 1220s. Kātibī taught it to his students, and was led by it to adopt non-Avicennan positions on many issues (sections 16.2 and 16.4 below). He also produced a number of short works on logic, among them important epistles on specific topics (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2006, 211–20).

Kātibī lived through one of the major political events in Islamic history, the Mongol conquest. Soon after the fall of Baghdad in 1258, the Īl-Khānids set Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī the task of founding an astronomical observatory in their new capital, Marāgha. Perhaps at some time Ṭūsī had shared a class with Kātibī. In any event, he had come to know of Kātibī somehow: Ṭūsī engaged four scholars in 1259 to help him with the observatory, and one of them was Kātibī (Sayılı 1960, 205; Schmidtke 1991, 15–16). Sometime after its foundation, Abharī also worked at the observatory, though it seems he left before his death.

Since the *Shamsiyya* is dedicated to Shams al-Dīn al-Juwaynī, the vizier of the Īl-Khānids, it is a text written or redacted after Shams al-Dīn's accession to power in 1262. This in turn makes it a Marāgha text. The period in which the Marāgha observatory flourished was unique in several respects. Under non-Muslim rulers, Sunnī legal scholars lost their privileged position, and the interests of scholars of the exact sciences—formerly funded through private patronage—were promoted. *Waqf* monies were directed to support the teaching and research activities of the observatory (Madelung 2000, 1; Sayılı 1960, 207). In this environment, with its changed social expectations and funding arrangements, the scholars of the non-Islamic sciences confronted the need to produce introductory textbooks for their disciplines, textbooks that would in some way parallel the introductory textbooks for *adab* and the Islamic sciences. The *Shamsiyya* is one such text, an up-to-date introduction to the latest discussions in its rapidly changing subject.

Marāgha provided the intellectual context for Kātibī's great works. In assessing the work at Marāgha, modern scholars concentrated initially on its impact on Copernican astronomy, and in the 1960s began to talk of the "Marāgha school" and then, somewhat later, of a "Marāgha revolution" that stretched to include non-Marāghan predecessors and successors (Saliba 1991). More recently, Eichner has extended the idea of a Marāgha revolution to the development of post-Avicennan philosophical and theological traditions (Eichner 2009, x). I would like to extend the idea yet further, to speak of a Marāgha school in logic, and a Marāgha revolution in the subject. This is not to say that logicians at Marāgha agreed how to resolve problems in their subject; Ṭūsī and Kātibī differed on profoundly important issues. But by coming together, these scholars were able to recognize a canon of books that logicians had to read before participating in the enterprise. The Marāgha logic canon was ultimately based upon the works of Avicenna. But Avicenna was for these logicians as old as Kant is for us, and it was Rāzī and Khūnajī who had set the most urgent matters for debate. Marāgha logicians also had a common set of technical terms, a common awareness of certain problems, and common ways of appraising candidate solutions to these problems. Finally, they had—and this perhaps is the most important single point—a self-confidence born of the great successes of the school in the various fields its scholars worked in, a self-belief that lent itself to the production of books unencumbered by traditional expectations as to doctrine and format.

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[6] *Jāmiʿ al-daqāʾiq*. I have consulted British Library Or. 11201. Pious respects for the dead Abharī are at 32v.

[7] Khūnajī, *Kashf*. The editor's introduction is useful for all points discussed here.

Sometime after the Marāgha observatory was founded, Kātibī taught al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311); both were to become famous scholars. Both were also taught by Ṭūsī, and so had a formation in logic from two men with differing views as to how the subject should be developed. Kātibī was connected with Marāgha until shortly before his death, when he may have left with Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī to establish a school in Juwayn near Nīshāpūr; perhaps it was there that Kātibī died.[8]

Shīrāzī and Ḥillī both had a hand in training Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥtānī (d. 766/1365) (Schmidtke 1991, 39; Walbridge 1992, 172), a Persian scholar who later traveled west and ultimately died in Damascus. His commentary on the *Shamsiyya* was finished in 1329 (Āghā Buzurg 1983–86, 3/388 no. 1395), by which time the Marāgha observatory was no more than a windswept ruin. The commentary consists by turns in the provision of historical background to a dispute, the expansion of logical formulations, and rejection or modification of some of Kātibī's conclusions (all exemplified below, especially section 16.4). Going through Taḥtānī's commentary provides a glimpse of how lively it must have been to read the *Shamsiyya* with a learned teacher.

16.2. The Text of the *Shamsiyya*

In this section, I make two passes in introducing the text of the *Shamsiyya*. On the first, I compare its structure, style, and contents in broad terms with that of Avicenna's *Pointers and Reminders*, because *Pointers* is the text from which, in the last analysis, it is descended. On the second pass, I look at how the *Shamsiyya* relates to the thirteenth-century project to present logic as an Aristotelian science.

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[8] From Al-Rahim's forthcoming *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition* (see below, "Acknowledgements"); Schmidtke 1991, 17; Walbridge 1992, 12.

16.2.1. The *Shamsiyya* and *Pointers*

As is characteristic of the great teaching texts of Islamic culture, the *Shamsiyya* is at points almost mnemonic. It was broken down, probably by Kātibī himself, into roughly 120 lemmata, divided into four treatises preceded by an introduction: (1) "On Simple Terms," (2) "On Propositions and Their Valuations," (3) "On Syllogism," and a (4) conclusion dealing with demonstration and sophistical fallacies. The brevity of the *Shamsiyya* and its need for expansion through commentary would have compelled its readers to compare it to that "Koran of the philosophers" (as Ibn Taymiyya called it) *Pointers and Reminders*.

That said, a glance at the tables of contents of the two works makes it seem they are of quite distinct structure. In fact, however, the structure of *Pointers* had been keenly discussed from the time of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who had already restructured *Pointers* slightly in his *Gist of Pointers* (Rāzī, *Lubāb al-Ishārāt*); the *Gist* is indicative of an ongoing discussion that issues in a text ordered like the *Shamsiyya*. Rāzī joined Paths 1 and 2 of *Pointers* (respectively, on preliminary notions, and on the five predicables) as a single path, dealt with Path 3 (on preliminary matters to do with propositions) as an independent path, joined Paths 4 and 5 (respectively, on the matter and mode of propositions, and on contradiction and conversion) as a single path, dealt with Path 6 (on syllogistic matter, which is to say, the epistemic status of propositions) as an independent path, joined Paths 7 and 8 (respectively, on syllogism and metasyllogistic) as a single path, and joined Paths 9 and 10 (respectively, on demonstration and fallacies) as a single path. In other words, Rāzī compressed the ten paths of *Pointers* into six, keeping its overall structure intact.

In the light of *Gist*, the structure of the *Shamsiyya* can be seen as one stage further in the compression of *Pointers*. First, Kātibī joined Path 3 with the already merged Paths 4 and 5 to form a treatise on the formal aspects of the proposition. Second, he used a distinction identified by Ṭūsī to be at play in the ordering of *Pointers*, between form and matter (Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*, 130, ad 1.2 §4); Kātibī treated all material considerations together, which gave him a reason to merge Path 6 with the already merged Paths 9 and 10. Taḥtānī summarized the rationale behind the structure:

> **Text 1:** Kātibī only ordered it in this way because, of that which must be known in logic, beginning in the discipline either depends upon it, or does not depend upon it. If it is the first it makes up the preface. If it is the second, then investigation of it either has to do with simple terms (the first treatise), or with combinations. Investigation into combinations must either be concerned with those which are not sought per se (the second treatise), or with those that are sought per se. Reflection about them must either be relative to form alone (the third treatise), or relative to matter (the conclusion). (Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* [1948], 4.4–8)

The preface and four treatises that make up the *Shamsiyya* are, in short, descendants of the ten paths that make up *Pointers*. Further, the mnemonic texture of the prose recalls the indicative style of presentation of *Pointers*. Such a style is motivated by a conviction that proper teaching should do no more than indicate to the student the outline of the proofs sought.[9]

In terms of content Kātibī is fundamentally an Avicennan logician. He accepted Avicenna's division of the syllogistic into *iqtirānī* and *istithnāʾī*, as opposed to categorical and hypothetical (§89), he took a proposition without an explicit modal operator to be temporally modalized (§69), and he accepted all of Avicenna's propositional conditions for an investigation of modality (§§52–58) (see, respectively, Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*, 374, 307 f., 264 f). But the points at which Kātibī departed from Avicenna are especially noteworthy because, in every case, he followed Khūnajī. Above all, when dealing with the major exegetical problem in Avicenna's modal syllogistic, how to square all the inferences he accepted with one another, Kātibī simply gave up and adopted a different approach to stipulating truth-conditions for the propositions (see section 16.4):

> **Text 2:** The status of the two possibility propositions with respect to conversion or its failure is unknown due to the fact that the demonstration mentioned to prove their conversion depends on the conversion of the negative necessity proposition as itself, and on the productivity of a possibility minor with a necessity major in the first figure, and neither of these can be verified. This in turn is due to lack of success in finding a proof that compels acceptance or rejection of the conversion of the possibility proposition. (§80)[10]

There are further, minor, points of difference with Avicennan doctrine not found in *Pointers*, including the designation of the subject matter of logic (§§5, 6) (El-Rouayheb 2012), and how to define a conversion with negative terms (§82) (see Avicenna, *Qiyās*, 93–94; cf. Khūnajī, *Kashf*, 147–48); and there is a major difference. Kātibī devoted 21 of the *Shamsiyya*'s 120 lemmata to outline a logic of conditional and disjunctive propositions, sketching how they contribute to inferences. The ordering, and the departures from Avicenna, are entirely in line with Khūnajī's work on the subject.[11]

16.2.2. Logic as Science

The *Shamsiyya* is typical of the Marāgha movement's drive to square all disciplines against the requirements of an Aristotelian science. The most successful outcome of the move remained geometry, transcending all work at the observatory as astronomy's superordinate science. It is particularly in the introduction of the *Shamsiyya* (§§1–6) that the groundwork is laid for this presentation of logic. There logic is said to be not only a science (§§5, 6), but also an instrument for the other sciences (§3); this recapitulates Avicenna's position (for which see the classic Sabra 1980).

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[9] Gutas 1988, 307–11. See section 16.3 below for examples. I wouldn't want to push this comparison too far; unlike Avicenna, I don't think Kātibī intended to withhold knowledge.

[10] Street 2002, sec. 2 lays out the problems in interpreting Avicenna's modal syllogistic; for Khūnajī's response, see Khūnajī, *Kashf*, 136, 144, and section 9.

[11] A summary of what is given: definitions, §§ 38, 39; kinds, truth-conditions, quantification, §§ 60–66; contradictories, § 72; conversions, § 81; conversions by negation, § 86; co-implication of molecular propositions, § 87; syllogisms, §89, §§ 105–9, §§ 110, 111. Cf. Khūnajī, *Kashf*, section 10. This is a badly understudied subject; Khūnajī may have been preceded in these doctrines by others.

In conceiving logic as a science and an instrument, a problem looms. If logic is a science and an instrument, and is the instrument that all the sciences stand in need of, will logic stand in need of itself? This might lead to a vicious circle. What follows is how Ṭūsī faced the potential problem.

> **Text 3**: The greater part of logic consists of technical terms to which one needs to be alerted; of primary propositions of which one needs to be reminded and which prepare for others; and lines of theoretical investigation that are such that one does not fall into error concerning them (the like of which geometry uses in its demonstrations). None of these stands in need of logic. Should any of these need logical canons (and that will be rarely), that need will only be for the first kind [that is, the technical terms]; so there is no circularity of need at all. (Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*, 118.8–22)

Six lemmata are given to introductory matters, in which Kātibī silently adopted Ṭūsī's strategy to avoid the circularity problem; other preliminaries are also covered. Taḥtānī expanded on these, and his comments clarify how the study of logic was laid out as a science:

> **Text 4**: What is meant by prefatory material here is what beginning in the science depends on. Beginning either depends on conceiving the science, because if the beginner in a science has not conceived that science in the first place, then he seeks what is absolutely unknown, and that is inconceivable due to the impossibility of directing the soul toward what is absolutely unknown.
>
> Or beginning depends on explaining the need for logic, because were the final cause and purpose of the science unknown, its study would be futile.
>
> Or it depends on [delimiting] its subject matter, because the sciences are distinguished from one another according to distinct subject matters. Jurisprudence, for example, is distinguished from legal methodology by its subject matter (because in jurisprudence one investigates the acts of the ethically obligated insofar as they are licit or illicit, proper or corrupt, whereas legal methodology investigates traditional proofs insofar as they reveal juridical qualifications). Since the first has one subject matter and the second another, they come about as two distinct sciences, each individuated from the other. Were the beginner in a science not acquainted with what kind of thing its subject matter is, he wouldn't be able to distinguish the science he desires to learn, and he wouldn't be discerning in his study. (Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* [1948], 4.apu–6.apu)

Logic is to be conceived under its description: "the canonical instrument that, if implemented, preserves our mind from error in thinking" (§3); its instrumental nature provides it with a final cause derivative on the sciences it helps us come to think about correctly. Yet, as a science, it has its own subject matter:

> **Text 5**: The subject of logic is known conceptions and assents, because the logician investigates them insofar as they conduce to a conception or an assent. He also investigates them insofar as what conduces to conception depends on them, like their being universal, particular, essential, accidental, genus, differentia; and insofar as what conduces to assent depends on them, whether proximately (like their being a proposition, the converse of a proposition, the contradictory of a proposition), or remotely (like their being subject and predicate).
>
> It is customary to call what conduces to conception an explanatory phrase, and to call what conduces to assent an argument. (§§5, 6)

In logic, one investigates the essential properties (that is, the necessary but non-constitutive properties) of conceptions and assents insofar as they lead to further conceptions and assents. In the following section I examine two examples of the investigations conducted in the *Shamsiyya*.

16.3. Proofs without Perfection

The *Shamsiyya* presents logic as a science, deriving all conclusions from first principles. I examine briefly two proofs taken from the modal syllogistic (which is Kātibī's chief interest in the *Shamsiyya*). The bulk of the difficulty in proving valid inferences in the modal syllogistic lies in the proofs for the conversions through which the syllogisms are—for the most part—proved. For example, in Kātibī's exposition, by proving that "no A is ever B" converts to "no B is ever A" (§75), a proof is available to show that the premise-pair "every J is always B" and "no A is ever B" leads to the conclusion, "no J is ever A" (§93). It is, in the terms of Text 5 above, an examination of conceptions and assents "insofar as what conduces to assent depends on them, [in this case] proximately (like their being . . . the converse of a proposition)."

By looking at these proofs, I hope to convey a sense of the work a student had to get through in coming to grips with the *Shamsiyya*. I also want to draw attention to a notion Kātibī has in play in these proofs when referring to some of them as self-evident (*bayyin bi-dhātihi*), which he called on rather than the notion of perfection used by Aristotle and Avicenna (Wisnovsky 2010, 259, 264). What I have to say goes to how Kātibī implemented the program that seeks to present logic as a science.

Conversion of a proposition is defined thus:

> **Text 6**: Conversion with unchanged terms consists of placing the first part of the proposition second and the second part first, with the truth and quality remaining in the converse as they were in the convertend. (§73)

The proofs that are given for conversions are of three kinds (see §79), but the most common method is by way of "the proof Avicenna was satisfied with," which is a proof method adopted by Fārābī but first used by Alexander. The first of the proofs given:

> **Text 7**: The negative absolute necessity and absolute perpetuity e-propositions[12] both convert as a universal perpetuity e-proposition, because if it is of necessity, or always, true, "No J is B," then always, "No B is J"; otherwise, "Some B is once J," and this, together with the original proposition, would produce "Some B is not possibly B" in necessity propositions, and "Some B is never B" in perpetuity propositions; this is absurd. (§75)

I set out the proof for one of these conversions (of the perpetuity e-proposition) a little more clearly. Bear in mind that contradictories have been defined earlier, §69:

1. No J is ever B (to be converted)
2. Not (no B is ever J) (assumed)
3. Some B is at least once J (=2)
4. Some B is never B (3, 1 by Ferio AXA, absurd)

So the original assumption that led to the absurdity, step 2, has to be rejected; and thus we know that "no J is ever B" converts to "no B is ever J." Let us dwell on what leads to step 4, the syllogism "Some B is at least once J," "No J is ever B," therefore "Some B is never B." This is taken to be self-evident. It is easier to contemplate with three terms:

Ferio AXA

1. Some J is at least once B (premise)
2. No B is ever A (premise)
3. Some J is never A (conclusion)

Expanded further according to the readings for externalist propositions (see Text 12 in section 16.4 below), we have: "Something that is at least once J is at least once B," and "Whatever is at least once B is never A," therefore "Something that is at least once J is never A." Kātibī took Ferio AXA to be self-evident.

Here is the second proof in this section of the *Shamsiyya*.

> **Text 8**: The negative general conditioned and the general conventional[13] convert as a universal general conventional, because if it is of necessity, or perpetually, true, "No

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[12] I omit a list of Kātibī's propositional types; the reader should consult Rescher 1974 and (for the Arabic terms) Street 2000. Kātibī's examples (§ 52): "No man is possibly a stone" (absolute necessity e-proposition), "No man is ever a stone" (absolute perpetuity e-proposition).

[13] Kātibī's examples (§ 52): "No writer possibly keeps his fingers still as long as he writes" (general conditioned e-proposition); "No writer ever keeps his fingers still as long as he writes" (general conventional e-proposition). The scope of the "as long as" clause is clear from these examples.

> J is B as long as it is J", then "No B is ever J as long as it is B"; otherwise, "Some B is J while B," and this with the original proposition produces "Some B is not B while B"; this is absurd. (§76)

The argument here goes like this (and this time I single out the general conditioned proposition, which converts as a general conventional proposition; for the scope of "while B," see footnotes 13 and 14):

1. No J is possibly B as long as it is J (convertend)
2. Not (no B is ever J as long as it is B) (assumed)
3. Some B is at least once J while B (=2)
4. Some B is not always B while B (3, 1 by Ferio LwXwXw; absurd).

Obviously, this is also a *reductio* proof, but the syllogism called on is

Ferio LwXwXw[14]

1. Some J is at least once B while J (premise)
2. No B is possibly A as long as it is B (premise)
3. Some J is not always A while J (conclusion).

Expanded once again according to the truth-conditions of the propositions, we have "Something that is at least once J is at least once B while J," and "Whatever is at least once B is not possibly A as long as it is B," therefore "Something that is at least once J is not always A while J." An example at this point may help: "Some afflicted with pleurisy sometimes cough while afflicted," "No one coughing is possibly silent as long as he is coughing," therefore "Some afflicted with pleurisy are not always silent while afflicted." (The minor premise is one of Kātibī's examples [§69]; I hope he would accept the major I proffer.)

Have we at this point taken what is to be proved back to first principles, back to what in Text 3 above is referred to as "technical terms . . . primary propositions . . . and lines of theoretical investigation that are such that one does not fall into error concerning them"? The conditions for first-figure productivity with respect to modality (§§98 and 99) do not mention the proposition that is the minor premise (premise 1 above, a *ḥīniyya muṭlaqa*); the proposition isn't even among those investigated in the *Shamsiyya* (§§51–59, though it does come up in §69 as the contradictory of the general conventional). So is Ferio LwXwXw a line of investigation safe from error? Is it self-evidently productive? Kātibī's definitions of "self-evidence" need to be considered in answering this question.

Kātibī's notion of self-evidence is never defined in the *Shamsiyya* for syllogisms, but rather as something that is said of implicates. In a science, the subjects of the science are examined in light of the principles of the science, and essential accidents (necessary but non-constitutive properties) are proved to belong to those subjects. That some of these non-constitutive properties belong to their subjects is immediately evident (for example, that a triangle has three angles); the immediately obvious propositions recording these facts can be pressed into service along with the other principles to prove that further, non-evident, essential accidents belong to the subjects (for example, that a triangle has internal angles summing to two right angles). The subjects are implicants of their properties, the properties are their implicates. The non-evident implicates call on an intermediate consideration—a middle—which makes it evident that they belong.

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[14] I use the "w" next to the capital letter to signify that the premise is read with a condition on the subject, "as long as the subject is described with what it is described by." The minor (premise 1) is what Rescher (1974) translates as the "absolute continuing," also with the temporal condition on the subject.

> **Text 9**: The implicate of the quiddity . . . is either evident, such that its conception along with the conception of its implicant is sufficient for the mind to declare an implication between the two (like divisibility into two equal parts for four); or it is not evident, such that it needs a middle for the mind to declare that there is an implication between the two (like three angles summing to two right angles for triangle). "Evident" may also be said of an implicate whose conception follows from the conception of its implicant; the first definition is the weaker. (§22)

The strong sense of evident implicate has the requirement:

> Given the conception of P, the mind can see without a middle that Q is an implicate of P.

On the other hand, by Kātibī's weak sense of evident implicate, we have

> Given the conception of P and the conception of Q, the mind can see without a middle that Q is an implicate of P.

Kātibī, and Khūnajī for that matter (Khūnajī, *Kashf*, 33.14–33.16), perhaps call on the weaker notion of self-evidence. In saying first-figure syllogisms are self-evidently productive, Kātibī, it would seem, takes the syllogisms to be the two premises, which imply (are implicant of) the conclusion (the implicate of the syllogism) (§88).[15] In the case of Ferio LwXwXw, then, that the conclusion follows is self-evident only in the weaker sense. Kātibī was not claiming that, given the two premises, it is evident that the conclusion follows. He was only claiming that—having tested various conclusions by trial and error—given both the premises, a putative conclusion. and the truth-conditions of the propositions, it is evident that the conclusion follows.

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[15] Ṭūsī speaks of syllogistic proofs as proofs of the reasoned fact, which supports this line of speculation. Ṭūsī, *Ḥall*, 391.17 needs to be corrected against MS Or. 10901, 75r.4, to read *bayānāt limmiyya* rather than *bayānāt thalātha*.

16.4. The Subject Term

In what follows, I look in detail at a discussion that shows how much Kātibī was drawing on a contemporary debate involving Khūnajī, Ṭūsī, and Abharī—in short, the logicians in conversation with whom he developed his logic. It is possible to reconstruct in quite precise stages the way the arguments about the subject term unfolded, and this reconstruction serves to highlight how directly responsive the *Shamsiyya* was to current logical debates (and also to show that it was likely written after 1265).

All the categorical propositions treated in Kātibī's logic have a subject term that is understood in one of two ways.

> **Text 10**: Our statement "Every J is B" is used occasionally according to the essence, and its meaning is that everything that, were it to exist, would be a J (taken from among possible items) would be, insofar as it were to exist, a B; that is, everything that is an implicant of J is an implicant of B. And occasionally it is used according to external existence, and its meaning is that every J externally, whether at the time of the judgment or before it or after it, is B externally.
>
> The distinction between the two considerations is clear. Were there no squares in external existence it would be true to say "Every square is a figure" under the first consideration and not the second; and were there no figures in external existence other than squares, it would be correct to say "Every figure is a square" under the second consideration but not the first.
>
> On this basis, assess the remaining quantified propositions. (§§45–47)

The first way of taking the subject term allows a proposition to be true without referring to anything that actually exists. This probably fits Avicenna's truth-conditions for propositions better than the second way, and readers of Avicenna have explored versions of the essentialist reading as a way to make sense of his syllogistic.[16] What matters for present purposes, however, is a lively debate that is not concerned with the interpretation of Avicenna, but with difficulties in referring to non-existent subjects.

Before I consider this debate, two matters deserve attention. The first has to do with the curious terms used to refer to readings of the subject term, which are explained by Taḥtānī:

> **Text 11**: "Every J is B" is considered at times according to the essence (whereupon it's called "essentialist,", as though [the subject] is an essence in a proposition used in the sciences), and at other times according to external reality (whereupon it's

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[16] After Khūnajī (see Texts 14 and 15 below) the interpretive use of the distinction had to be reclaimed; Ahmed 2010 and Ahmed 2011 offer important material for a treatment of the distinction, which I glance at below. Everything I have written myself on the distinction to date fails to distinguish the—at least three—different ways the distinction was developed.

> called "externalist," and what is meant by "external" is what is external to the senses). (Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* [1948], 94.6–8)

The second is how the externalist reading is to be understood. Taḥtānī explains:

> **Text 12**: What is meant by the second [the externalist reading] is that every J externally is B externally; and the judgment in it is on the externally existent, whether its being described as J is at the time of the judgment or before it or after it (because what never exists externally cannot be B externally).
>
> It is said "whether at the time of the judgment or before it or after it" just to dispel the impression of someone who supposes that the meaning of "J is B" is describing the J with B-ness at the time it is described with J-ness. For indeed the judgment on it is not linked to the description of J such that it must be realized externally at the time of the realization of the judgment; rather it is on the substance of J, and the judgment only claims its existence [at some time or other]. The description of the subject with J-ness need not be realized at the same time as what realizes the judgment [with B]. If we say "Every writer is a laugher," it is not among the conditions of the substance of the writer being subject that it be writing at the moment of being described with laughter; rather it is enough for this proposition that the subject be described with being a writer at a given time. In the same way our statement "Every sleeper wakes" is true if the substance of the sleeper is described with two descriptions, even though at two different times (Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* [1948], 95.pu–96.7).

16.4.1. The Essentialist Reading

In an affirmative proposition like "every triangle is a figure," do I intend the proposition to refer only to triangles that exist in external reality? If I do, then when there happen to be no actual triangles, it is true under the same understanding of the subject term to say "No triangle is a figure," and "No triangle has internal angles summing to two right angles." Alternatively, the subject of the proposition could be taken to refer to things that exist in the mind, like perfect geometric figures, whereupon the last two propositions would be false. Finally, when entertaining claims that turn out to be false, the subject might be taken to refer to things that are in some way impossible. Before the Marāgha period, it had been common to assume that a subject term could refer to external reality, intelligible reality, and the impossible. Ṭūsī wrote while still in Alamut:

> **Text 13**: What we mean by the existence of the subject of an affirmative proposition is not only its existence in external reality, because in the sciences we make affirmative judgments of intelligible subjects even though we don't know whether or not they exist in external reality (just as we say, "The icosahedron is such and such"). Nor is its existence only in the intellect, because we also make judgments of external existents, about both the perpetual of existence and the non-perpetual of existence. What we mean by the existence of the subject, rather, is an existence more general than the external and the mental.

> Moreover, affirmative judgments may be made of non-existent subjects like the vacuum and the atom. Such a judgment is either in a negative sense, as in "the void is impossible of existence," or [the subject is] assumed to exist at the time of the judgment in the way claimed by those who hold it to exist, as in "The vacuum is an immaterial dimension," and "The atom is a holder of a position," and so forth. (Ṭūsī, *Asās*, 110.6–13)

Even while Ṭūsī was rehearsing these loose provisions as to how the subject term should be taken, Khūnajī was forging an entirely different approach. Adopting existing terms and formulations, which he however developed in ways unforeseen by those who first instigated them, he traced inferences from propositions with impossible subjects. He formulated the essentialist reading thus:

> **Text 14**: We mean by the second not everything that has entered existence, but rather everything that would be a J, were it to exist (and that it would be a B, insofar as it were to exist). (Khūnajī, *Kashf*, 84.14–84.15)

From this point on, to the best of my knowledge, Khūnajī's investigations into the essentialist reading are without precedent. This becomes clear from the moment he starts to investigate how propositions with essentialist readings of the subject term contribute to inferences. Everyone—Khūnajī, Abharī, Ṭūsī, Kātibī—agreed with Avicenna that an actualist e-proposition in the externalist reading does not convert like an assertoric e-proposition in Aristotle's syllogistic. The counterexample, "No man is always laughing," disproves the conversion, because "No laughing is always a man" is false; the substances of which the term "laughing" has at least once been true are necessarily men. But for Khūnajī, the counterexample only has force if the subject term is taken in the externalist reading.

Taken in Khūnajī's essentialist reading, however, "No J is always B" converts to a perpetuity o-proposition, "Some B is never J." To show this is so, Khūnajī had to offer a proof for the conversion, then resist counterexamples to it. I offer a schematic presentation of his proof (Khūnajī, *Kashf*, 129.4–13).

No J is always B converts to some B is never J:

1. No J is always B
2. Every always-B is at least once B (self-evident)
3. No always-B is ever J (see below)
4. Some B is never J (Felapton, 2 and 3).

Proof for 3 in proof above:

5. Not (no always-B is ever J) (assumption)
6. Some always-B is at least once J (=5)
7. Some always-B is not always B (Ferio, 6 and 1; absurd).

Khūnajī then dealt with counterexamples.

> **Text 15**: They argue conversion fails for these propositions because it is true, "No moon is eclipsed"… and "No animal is breathing"… yet [130] their converses are not true, namely, "Some eclipsed is not a moon," and "some breathing is not animal."
>
> The answer to this is that we reject that "Some eclipsed is not a moon" and similar statements are false if the subject is taken according to the essentialist reading. This is because, in this case, its meaning is some of what would be eclipsed, were it to come to exist, would not be a moon, insofar as it had come to exist. [The claim this is false] is to be rejected; the most that can be said in this matter is that every eclipsed that has come to exist is a moon, but from this it does not follow that it is true that everything that is eclipsed, were it to come to exist, would be a moon insofar as it comes to exist. This is because [the proposition with an essentialist subject] deals with actual, possible, and impossible items [that come under the subject term]. Were we to stipulate the possibility [of these items] along with [the other stipulations], their status would be that of externally existent things. So the eclipsed-that-is-not-a-moon, even though it is impossible, is among those individuals that would be eclipsed, were they to come to exist, even though it is not necessary that any would be a moon if they came to exist.
>
> Overall, if these propositions are taken in the essentialist reading, the proof we have given for their conversion works, the counterarguments are not compelling, and the proper view must be that the conversion is correct. (Khūnajī, *Kashf*, 129.14–130.12)

What this means for the counterexample considered before, "No man is always laughing," is that it will convert on this account to "Some laughing is not ever a man." This is because we may, under Khūnajī's essentialist reading, posit the impossible "laughing-that-is-not-a-man."

The next stages in the refinement of the essentialist reading prior to its inclusion in the *Shamsiyya* involve Abharī and then Ṭūsī. (I defer an account of the arguments themselves to Text 16 below.) In the *Revelation of Thoughts*, Abharī took up Khūnajī's understanding of the essentialist reading (though without noting that it is Khūnajī's), and investigated its consequences further (Ṭūsī, *Taʿdīl*, 161–62); the upshot of his further investigation shows that the e-proposition can never be true on the essentialist reading. Sometime after Abharī's death, Ṭūsī came across a copy of *Revelation* and wrote a critique of it. On this point, among many other criticisms (Ṭūsī would have preferred to abandon the externalist-essentialist distinction altogether), Ṭūsī argued that Abharī had not gone far enough in his critique, and showed that not only will the e-proposition never be true, nor will the a-proposition (Ṭūsī, *Taʿdīl*, 163).

Kātibī accepted the validity of the further inferences from Khūnajī's reading made by Abharī and Ṭūsī, which is why he specifically limited the items under an essentialist subject to "possible items" (or, perhaps better, "self-consistent items"). Taḥtānī set out the arguments (still making no mention of Khūnajī by name):

> **Text 16**: Kātibī only restricted the items to the possible because, were the items left unrestricted, no universal proposition would ever be true. Take the affirmative: Were it to be said, "Every J is B" on this reading, we would say that this isn't the case. That is because J-that-is-not-B, were it to exist, would be J and not B, so some of that which, were it to exist, would be J, would be, insofar as it were to exist, not B. But this contradicts "Every J is B" on this reading. . . .
>
> [95.3] Now take the negative: Were it to be said, "No J is B," we say it is false. That is because J-that-is-B, were it to exist, would be a J and a B, so some of that which, were it to exist, would be a J, would be, insofar as it were to exist, a B. But this contradicts the claim that nothing that, were it to exist, would be a J, would be, insofar as it were to exist, a B.
>
> When Kātibī restricted the subject term by possibility, he drove off this line of objection. (Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* [1948], 94.12–95.6)

Recall that in his argument against the counterexample in Text 15 above, Khūnajī made the following claim:

> This is because [the proposition with an essentialist subject] deals with actual, possible, and impossible individuals [that come under the subject term]. Were we to stipulate the possibility [of these individuals] along with [the other stipulations], their status would be that of externally existent things.

I take it that Kātibī accepted that this is true: if the subject term is limited in the essentialist reading to self-consistent items, the status of propositions with an essentialist subject will be that of propositions with an externalist subject. Further, I take it that to have the same "status" means that all and only the inferences that can be drawn from one or more externalist propositions can be drawn with equal validity from the corresponding essentialist propositions.[17]

"Taken from among possible items," then, is a rider added to the formulation of the essentialist reading to block Khūnajī's line of reasoning. What about "Every implicant of J is an implicant of B," presented as a gloss on "everything that, were it to exist" and so forth? Its explanation allows us to see that Taḥtānī was not simply a faithful commentator, but had his own logical program. The essentialist reading considers an underlying substance, and posits that "if it were to exist, then it would be J." Is this "if" strong (in this tradition, an implicative) or weak? In other words, is it that the underlying substance is inseparable from J, or merely compatible with it?

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[17] In *Jāmiʿ al-daqāʾiq* (MS British Library Or. 11201), at 61r.1, Kātibī states that limiting essentialist subjects to self-consistent items blocks Khūnajī's proof; that is a necessary preliminary to the stronger claim I am assuming he accepted. I have not examined Kātibī's commentary on *Disclosure*, and it may settle the question. However, Ahmed (2011) presents the arguments of an eighteenth-century logician who effectively comes to a similar conclusion; see section IV and the translated text.

> **Text 17**: Khūnajī and his followers interpreted it as implicative, so they say that the meaning of "Everything that were it to exist would be J would be insofar as it were to exist a B" is that everything that is the implicant of J is the implicant of B.[18]

Taḥtānī strongly—and rightly—disagreed; this reading would exclude most propositions from logical analysis, except for those with subject- and predicate-descriptions that are implicates of the substance underlying the subject.

In summary: The *Shamsiyya* provides us with a way to construct propositions that refer to things in the world, and another way to construct them to refer to a domain of things, not all of which are instantiated. The *Shamsiyya* does not specify which of the two readings it investigates because—I believe—the investigation applies to both. There is no longer any way to construct propositions along the lines of "The vacuum is an immaterial dimension," and Taḥtānī resigned himself to this philosophically:

> **Text 18**: It is not to be leveled as a criticism that, because the craft should have general rules, there are propositions that cannot be taken under either of these two considerations (namely, those whose subjects are impossible, as in "The co-creator is impossible," and "Every impossible is non-existent"). Because we say: No one claims to limit all propositions to the essentialist and the externalist. They do however claim that propositions used in the sciences are used for the most part under one of these two considerations, so they therefore set these readings down and extract their qualifications so they may thereby benefit in the sciences. The qualifications of the propositions that cannot be taken under either of these two considerations are not yet known; the generalization of rules is only to the extent of human capacity. (Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* [1948], 95.pu–96.11)

16.5. AFTER KĀTIBĪ

The *Shamsiyya* was warmly received among readers of vivid reputation. It had been used for teaching during Kātibī's lifetime, and one of its earliest readers, al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), wrote the first commentary on it, *Clear Rules in Commentary on the Epistle for Shams al-Dīn* (Ḥillī, *Qawāʿid*). A manuscript of this text survives from 1280 (Schmidtke 2012, 205), which means Ḥillī must have written it while Kātibī was still alive, or soon after he died. It is a commentary that is often critical of Kātibī's project. In his later commentary on Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd*, however, Ḥillī quietly adopted aspects of the logical doctrine of the *Shamsiyya* he had previously rejected.

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[18] Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* (1948), 95.12–95.13. I think Taḥtānī has arrived at this neat criticism by way of responding to Urmawī, at least, if I understand the argument analyzed in Ahmed 2010, section 1 correctly. I cannot find Khūnajī using the phrase "every implicant" etc., but Abharī and Kātibī—his "followers"—do make frequent use of it.

The next commentary to be written on the *Shamsiyya* was the one we are concerned with, by Ḥillī's student Taḥtānī, finished in 1329. Taḥtānī unpacked the tightly folded pronouncements of the *Shamsiyya*, and from time to time corrected its mistakes. Taḥtānī was far from a slavish commentator, and shifted the focus of study slightly away from Kātibī's interests. If we compare how Taḥtānī's commentary tracks against the treatment in the *Shamsiyya*, we find that the first 37 lemmata of the *Shamsiyya*'s 120 take up roughly half the commentary, the last 33 lemmata less than a quarter. Even by Taḥtānī's day there was a tendency to concentrate on the front matter of the *Shamsiyya*; that tendency only strengthened with the passage of time.

Taḥtānī's commentary became famous in its own right; as noted above, it has been superglossed more than the *Shamsiyya* has been glossed. It was also mined by other commentators on the *Shamsiyya*, notably by Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390); Taftāzānī also made use of Kātibī's major treatise on logic, *Summa of Subtle Points*. Although Taḥtānī's commentary is historically more important for the way logicians have understood the *Shamsiyya*, the massive number of higher-level commentaries written on it—many more than those on Taftāzānī's commentary—tend to make it seem even more influential relative to Taftāzānī's than it really was.

I would merely be recapitulating work by Wisnovsky and Schmidtke in tracking the myriad of commentaries on the *Shamsiyya* (Wisnovsky 2004; Schmidtke 2012). Instead, I trace in outline the western reception of the *Shamsiyya*. This came about by way of the Indian logical tradition, one of the most important regional traditions of Arabic logic (Ahmed 2012; I use especially Stage One and Tree I). It is said—though it has the whiff of legend about it—that a number of Taḥtānī's direct disciples settled in India, and until the end of the fifteenth century, Taḥtānī's commentary on the *Shamsiyya* was the only logic work read in the region. Perhaps it was the only work on the formal curriculum, which would not exclude the reading of other texts in less formal settings. Even by the beginning of the sixteenth century, when distinct traditions of logic teaching had crystallized, the *Shamsiyya* featured prominently. The British found it firmly positioned in the teaching curriculum when they arrived, and came to regard it as so culturally important that it was printed, along with Taḥtānī's commentary, at Fort William in 1815 (Taḥtānī, *Qootbee*). Fifty years later, working in India, Aloys Sprenger edited and partly translated the *Shamsiyya* (without the commentary); in this form, it was to become the foundational text for the Western study of the history of Arabic logic (Sprenger 1862).

The main significance of the Sprenger translation was that, one hundred years later, it attracted the attention of the logician Nicholas Rescher. Sprenger had excused himself from translating the more complicated modal sections of the *Shamsiyya*, saying that modal logic was no longer taught in Indian schools; but what he had translated was enough to show that something interesting was being investigated. Rescher translated what Sprenger had omitted, and offered a partial analysis of the system. He did this a number of times (at least four that I know of), beginning in 1967 and ending in 1975. The early efforts were dogged by a mistranslation of a difficult lemma (§91) (Rescher 1967). But his cousin, the famous Orientalist Oskar Rescher, had made him aware of an extraordinary little text copied by Muḥammad b. Fayḍ Allāh al-Shirwānī (d. 1119/

1707),[19] which was bought from Oskar Rescher by the British Museum in the late 1950s (now in the British Library as MS Or. 12405). Or. 12405 presents the same system we find in the *Shamsiyya*, with much fuller explanations. It enabled Nicholas Rescher to correct his translation of §91 along with other errors, and to offer a semantics for the system in modalized predicate calculus (Rescher 1974).

I would like to end this chapter by drawing attention to an irony in the reception of Kātibī's logic, and its interplay with the reception of Avicenna's logic. An eighteenth-century Ottoman logician, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Āmidī, with a floruit of 1761, was so famed for his work on syllogistic that he was given the nickname "Syllogism." He was, clearly, primarily a logician, and by the time he took up his pen, the reading of Avicenna's original texts must have been mainly an antiquarian pursuit. In any event, by that time, the reading of the *Shamsiyya* and the texts influenced by it had completely overshadowed Avicenna's logic; Āmidī claimed to be writing on Avicenna's logic, but in fact, he was writing on Kātibī's.[20]

The *Shamsiyya* is a true classic, not merely because it has been taken by Muslims over the centuries to have a non-negotiable role in the formation of a cultured mind. It projects a moment when a number of gifted logicians shared a vision of the field and its major problems; they had at their disposal a fully developed technical language; they felt a sense of urgency to give a clear exposition of logic, not just as a science, but as an instrument for all the sciences. Many of these factors—maturity, language, urgency—are precisely the preconditions for the production of a classic in the larger, Eliotic sense of the word. In this case, the conditions were met because of the nature of the Marāgha community, the discourse it fostered, and the scholars it trained. Not without flaws, the *Shamsiyya* exercises its fascination by way of the energy it still conveys of debates underway even while Kātibī was writing: the logical discussions of the late 1260s in Marāgha, crystallized as a paradigm for engagement with an evolving discipline.

CONTENTS OF THE *SHAMSIYYA*

0. Introduction

    0.1. On the Quiddity of Logic, and Proof of the Need for It 1–4
    0.2. On the Subject Matter of Logic 5,6

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[19] A scholar identified by Khaled El-Rouayheb.

[20] Ahmed 2011, 352. See footnote 17 above; I agree with Āmidī's understanding of the essentialist reading.

- 1. On Simple Terms
  - 1.1. On Expressions 7–14
  - 1.2. On Simple Meanings 15–23
  - 1.3. Five Inquiries into Universals and Particulars
    - 1.3.1. [Universals and Existence] 24
    - 1.3.2. [Natural, Logical, and Mental Universals] 25
    - 1.3.3. [Logical Interrelation of Universals and Their Contradictories] 26, 27
    - 1.3.4. [Real and Relative Senses of Particular] 28
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  - 1.4. On Definitions 35–37
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  - 2.1. On Defining the Proposition and Its Primary Divisions 38, 39
  - 2.2. On the Categorical Proposition
    - 2.2.1. Its Parts and Divisions 40–44
    - 2.2.2. On Verifying the Four Quantified Propositions 45–47
    - 2.2.3. On Propositions with Positive and Negative Terms 48–50
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  - 2.3. On the Divisions of the Molecular Proposition 60–66
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    - 2.4.1. On Contradiction 67–72
    - 2.4.2. On Conversion with Unchanged Terms 73–81
    - 2.4.3. On Conversion by Negation 82–86
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  - 3.2. On Mixes of Modalized Premises 91–97
  - 3.3. Connective Syllogisms with Molecular Premises 98–104
  - 3.4. On the Repetitive Syllogism 105–9
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- 4. Conclusion
  - 4.1. On Syllogistic Matter 116–19
  - 4.2. On the Parts of Which Sciences Consist 120

16.5.1. CONCORDANCE

A concordance among Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr* (Q) (Sprenger 1862) both Arabic (K) and English (S), and (Rescher 1967) (R). I cite the page numbers for Sprenger from Hodges's transcription, which is more easily obtainable than the original: for example, at https://cambridge.academia.edu/TonyStreet.

Table 16.1 Concordance

Lemma	Q	K	S	R
§1	7, 2	2, §3	3, §3	
§2	12, 7	2, §4	3, §4	
§3	16, 1	2, §5	3, §5(1)	
§4	21, 1	2, §6	3, §5(2)	
§5	22, 3	2, §7	3, §6	
§6	25, 11	2, §8	4, §7	
§7	28, 1	3, §9	4, §8	
§8	30, 18	3, §10	4, §9	
§9	31, 14	3, §11	5, §10	
§10	33, 7	3, §12(1)	5, §11(1)	
§11	36, 1	3, §12(2)	5, §11(2)	
§12	38, 10	3, §13	5, §12	
§13	41, 9	4, §14	6, §13	
§14	42, 2	4, §15	6, §14	
§15	44, 7	4, §16	6, §15	
§16	46, 10	4, §17	6, §16	
§17	49, 6	4, §18	7, §17	
§18	50, 19	4, §19	7, §18	
§19	52, 2	5, §20	7, §19	
§20	54, 14	5, §21	8, §20	
§21	55, 11	5, §22	8, §21	
§22	56, 3	5, §23	8, §22	
§23	59, 6	5, §24	8, §23	
§24	61, 1	5, §25	9, §24	
§25	61, 18	6, §26	9, §25	
§26	63, 5	6, §27	9, §26	
§27	65, 1	6, §28	9, §27	

Table 16.1 (Continued)

Lemma	Q	K	S	R
§28	69, 2	7, §29	10, §28	
§29	71, 9	7, §30	11, §29	
§30	72, 14	7, §31	11, §30	
§31	74, 1	7, §32	11, §31	
§32	75, 1	7, §33	11, §32	
§33	75, 12	7, §34	12, §33	
§34	76, 11	8, §35	12, §34	
§35	78, 1	8, §36	12, §35	
§36	79, 15	8, §37	12, §36	
§37	81, 1	8, §38	13, §37	
§38	82, 1	9, §39	13, §38	
§39	84, 6	9, §40	13, §39	
§40	86, 4	9, §41	14, §40	
§41	87, 12	9, §42	14, §41	
§42	88, 6	9, §43(1)	14, §42	
§43	89, 24	10, §43(2)	14, §43(1)	
§44	90, 15	10, §43(3)	15, §43(2)	
§45	91, 1	10, §44	15, §44	
§46	96, 12	§44	§44	
§47	97, 10	§44	§44	
§48	97, 19	10, §45	15, §45	
§49	98, 15	10, §46	15, §46	
§50	98, 26	10, §47	16, §47	
§51	101, 9	11, §48	16, §48	
§52	102, 13	11, §49	16, §49	
§53	105, 25	12, §51	17, §51	
§54	106, 23			

(*continued*)

Table 16.1 (Continued)

Lemma	Q	K	S	R
§55	107, 10	13		
§56	107, 28			
§57	108, 6			
§58	109, 4			
§59	109, 26	14		
§60	110, 22	14, §52/§53	19, §52 20, §53	
§61	112, 12	14, §53 (cont.)	20, §53 (cont.)	
§62	113, 1	14, §54	20, §54	
§63	113, 18	14, §55	20, §55	
§64	114, 25	15		
§65	115, 17	15, §56	21, §56	
§66	117, 28	15, §57	21, §57	
§67	118, 29	15, §58	22, §58	
§68	119, 24	15, §59	22, §59	
§69	121, 13	16, §60	22, §60	
§70	123, 11	16, §61	23, §61	
§71	124, 8		23, §62	
§72	125, 20	16, §62	23, §63	
§73	125, 27		23, §64	
§74	127, 1	16, §63	24, §65	
§75	127, 17	17, §64	24, §66	
§76	128, 1	17, §65	24, §67	
§77	128, 25	17, §66		68/66
§78	129, 21	17, §67		69/67
§79	130, 25			
§80	131, 12	18, §68		70/68

Table 16.1 (Continued)

Lemma	Q	K	S	R
§81	132, 11			
§82	133, 4	18, §69	22, §71	
§83	134, 10	19, §70		72/70
§84	135, 21	19, §71		73/71
§85	136, 9	19, §72		74/72
§86	137, 1			
§87	138, 1	20, §73	25, §75	
§88	138, 29	20, §74	26, §76	
§89	140, 8	20, §75	26, §77	
§90	141, 1	20, §76	26, §78	
§91	141, 25	21, §77	26, §79	
§92	143, 11	21, §78	27, §80	
§93	143, 28			
§94	145, 4	21, §79	28, §81	
§95	146, 23	22, §80	29, §82	
§96	148, 7			
§97	149, 10		30, §83	
§98	149, 23	23, §81		83/81
§99	150, 2			
§100	151, 25	23, §82		84/82
§101	152, 27			
§102	154, 13	23, §83		85/83
§103	155, 13	23, §84		86/84
§104	156, 23			
§105	160, 1	24, §85	30, §87	
§106	160, 25	24, §86	30, §88	

(*continued*)

Table 16.1 (Continued)

Lemma	Q	K	S	R
§107	161, 9	24, §88	30, §89	
§108	161, 21	25, §88	31, §90	
§109	162, 12	25, §89	31, §91	
§110	163, 6	25, §90	32, §92	
§111	164, 5			
§112	164, 25	26, §91	33, §93	
§113	165, 5	26, §92	33, §94	
§114	165, 15	26, §93	33, §95	
§115	166, 3	26, §94	34, §96	
§116	166, 21	27, §95	34, §97	
§117	167, 23			
§118	168, 4	27, §96	35, §98	
§119	169, 17	28, §97	36, §99	
§120	170, 11	29, §98	37, §100	

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CHAPTER 17

AL-MAWĀQIF FĪ ʿILM AL-KALĀM BY ʿAḌŪD AL-DĪN AL-ĪJĪ (D. 1355), AND ITS COMMENTARIES

ALNOOR DHANANI

Al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām by ʿAḍūd al-Dīn al-Ījī (680/1281–756/1356) is undoubtedly the most influential text of postclassical Sunnī *kalām*. Written as a curricular madrasa text, it elicited numerous commentaries over several centuries. In the Ottoman madrasa curriculum, it was studied alongside the *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* of Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī (740/1340–816/1413), the most well-known of its commentaries. In its turn, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* elicited several supercommentaries, including the *Ḥāshiya* of Mīr Muḥammad Zāhid al-Ḥarawī (d. 1101/1689). In the South Asian *Dars-i Niẓāmī* curriculum, *al-Mawāqif* was studied alongside Mir Zāhid's supercommentary on al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ* (Robinson 1997).

Al-Mawāqif is an exemplary late *kalām* text. As is well known, Ibn Khaldūn remarks in his *Muqaddima* that the exposition of *kalām* by al-Ghazālī and by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī represented a departure from its earlier exposition by Ashʿarī authors such as al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwaynī. In his view, these "moderns" (*mutaʾakhkhirūn*) and those who followed in their footsteps mixed up and confused questions of *kalām* with those of *falsafa*. As a result, he claimed, these two disciplines "have become indistinguishable" (Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 2:214). Ibn Khaldūn names ʿAbd Allāh al-Bayḍāwī (d. early eighth/fourteenth century), the author of *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār min maṭāliʾ al-anẓār*, as one such "modern" *mutakallim*. He remarks that subsequent Iranian scholars (*ʿulamāʾ al-ʿajam*) persisted in mixing *kalām* with *falsafa*. This remark may be directed against al-Ījī, who, like al-Bayḍāwī, was Iranian. A comparison with al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawāliʿ* shows that al-Ījī closely follows the arrangement of *Ṭawāliʿ* and many of its questions in *al-Mawāqif*. This is not surprising—two of al-Ījī's teachers, Zayn al-Dīn al-Hanakī and Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-Jārburdī, had been students of al-Bayḍāwī (Manouchehri 2013).

Accordingly, al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif* continues the approach laid down in al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawāliʿ* albeit fleshing out the discussion and arguments in more detail.

Al-Ījī's unstated aim, which underlies his more detailed yet terse exposition in *al-Mawāqif*, is to present the overarching theories and specific positions of the rival explanatory systems of *falsafa* and *kalām*. He mentions specific arguments made for their characteristic positions and shows weaknesses of these arguments and positions through objections to premises or conclusions, all in a concise and often abstruse manner, thus making commentaries indispensable for deciphering and comprehending the text.[1] Moreover, al-Ījī extends his critique to the positions of the different schools of *kalām* as well as individual *mutakallimūn* on the questions he discusses, mentioning their particular arguments and positions as well as his objections to them. In all of this, al-Ījī's commitment to the primary theses of the Ashʿarī *kalām* is sometimes forcefully evident. Nevertheless, the change in the technical lexicon and conceptual framework, which, as noted above is characterized by Ibn Khaldūn as the way of the "moderns," resulted in reframing of the primary theses of Ashʿarī *kalām,* reordering of their order of exposition, and re-examining the arguments adduced in their support. As a result, madrasa readers of *al-Mawāqif* learned about *kalām* in the way of the "moderns." Al-Ījī's exposition provided them the opportunity to engage with the logical, natural philosophical and metaphysical content of *falsafa* albeit portrayed critically and often negatively, through the substantial engagement of *al-Mawāqif* with these subjects and their elaboration in the comments of al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ*—comments of someone who was well versed with the natural sciences and Avicennan metaphysics, having authored a number of commentaries on them (van Ess 2009). Accordingly, much of the content of *falsafa* found a place in the madrasas through the study of al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif.*

Al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām is divided into six *mawāqif* (stations): the First Station is devoted to epistemology and logic (van Ess 1966). The Second to common notions such as existence and nonexistence; essence; necessity, possibility, and impossibility; unity and multiplicity; and causation—notions that are shared by all classes of existents, that is to say, existents acknowledged by *kalām* ontology, consisting of God, who is Necessarily Existent (*wājib*), atoms (*jawāhir*), and accidents (*aʿrāḍ*). The Third is the first of two stations devoted to natural philosophy, examining the secondary qualities of the objects in the world, that is to say, inherent accidents. The Fourth is the second station devoted to natural philosophy, examining the space-occupying atoms or substances in which the accidents discussed in the previous station inhere; the sensible, insensible, psychological properties of the composite, complex, and elemental bodies compounded out of such accidents and atoms; and the particular substances of soul and intellect and claims about their incorporeality. The Fifth Station is devoted to natural theology, namely attributes of God in Himself and manifested through God's activity in the world; and the Sixth Station to questions of revealed theology such as prophecy, resurrection, religious disposition such as belief and unbelief, different views on postprophetic leadership, and an account of Muslim sects. *Al-Mawāqif* thus covers a wide encyclopedic range of topics, reviewing contested positions on them by exponents of *kalām* and *falsafa*, the arguments adduced in support of them, objections to them and counterarguments against them, as well as remarks and observations on the side. Obviously, only a small portion of this can be discussed in the topics selected for discussion here, but the style of presentation, the plethora of arguments and detail, is clearly exhibited in them. These topics have been selected to illustrate the engagement of the author, and of the commentators and students of *al-Mawāqif*, with some significant questions of Islamic intellectual history.

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[1] The first commentary on *al-Mawāqif* was by al-Ījī's student Shams al-dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384). The Beirut edition of *al-Mawāqif* lists four additional commentaries, those of Sharīf al-Jurjānī, Sayf al-Dīn al-Abharī, 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Haydar al-Harawī. It also lists thirty-two supercommentaries that are glosses on al-Jurjānī, many of them covering only some parts of *al-Mawāqif* (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 22–24—this pagination is of the material at the end of the book, consisting of the table of contents, a short biography of al-Ījī, and a list of commentaries and supercommentaries).

17.1. THE CONTENT OF *KALĀM*

Al-Mawāqif begins with a novel examination of *kalām* as a discipline of knowledge asking: what is it, what is its content, what is its utility, what is its rank in the hierarchy of disciplines, and what is its aim? Such an examination is modeled on Ibn Sīnā's corresponding discussion of *falsafa* metaphysics as a discipline of knowledge in *The Metaphysics of the Healing*—an examination that is based on the framework that Ibn Sīnā had explicated in the *Posterior Analytics of the Healing* (and was ultimately derived from Aristotle) (Ibn Sīnā, *Metaphysics*, 1–22; Ibn Sīnā, *Burhān*, 150–61). Al-Ījī's appropriation of this framework indicates that his aim is to present *kalām* as a discipline, albeit of the religious sciences, that fulfills the Avicennan criteria of what constitutes a proper discipline of knowledge, namely, specifying what it is, what is its content, and so on. Thus in *al-Mawāqif, kalām* is defined as "the discipline by means of which one can establish the principle beliefs of religion (*ʿaqāʾid dīnīyya*) by producing proofs (*ḥujjaj*) for them and by countering objections against them" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 7). Al-Ījī contends that the content (*mawḍūʿ*) of *kalām* consists of all questions connected with the establishment of these principle beliefs of religion whether "directly (*qarīban*) or remotely (*baʿīdan*)" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 7). He notes that some persons have held that the content of *kalām* ought to be restricted to God, His attributes, His acts, such as the creation of the world or resurrection in the hereafter, and His regulations (*aḥkām*), such as sending messengers. Such a restrictive view of *kalām*, al-Jurjānī adds, was held by Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī (d. 681/1283) (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 1:48).[2] Clearly such a view contends that

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[2] As the author of a gloss on a commentary on al-Urmawī's *al-Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*, al-Jurjānī was knowledgeable about his views. Al-Āmidī's formulation is similar (al-Āmidī, *Abkār*, 1:68). Al-Ījī's discussion parallels that of Ibn Sīnā who, in his discussion of the subject matter of metaphysics (*al-mawḍūʿ li-l-ʿilm al-ilāhī*), asks, "Is it the essence of the First Cause (*dhāt al-ʿilla al-ūlā*) so that its aim is knowledge of His attributes and acts, or is it something else?" (Ibn Sīnā, *Metaphysics*, 3). Ibn Sīnā's critique of views on the content of metaphysics has been analyzed by Dimitri Gutas (Gutas 1988, 238–54).

kalām should be restricted to topics that are properly theological. Al-Ījī dismisses this restrictive view, noting that the investigation of other entities such as atoms/substances (*jawāhir*) (the equivocality of this term is discussed below) and accidents (*aʿrāḍ*) is also found in, and belongs to, *kalām*. He further contends that *kalām*'s investigation of these entities is not just as an ancillary to its discussion about God. These entities are not self-evident; they cannot be taken for granted. They must constitute the subject matter of some discipline of knowledge. Were this discipline not *kalām*, there would be a need for a religious (*sharʿī*) discipline superior to *kalām* in which they would be discussed. That there is no such superior discipline in the religious sciences is patently clear to all (al-Ījī *Mawāqif*, 7). The possible objection, why ought such entities be discussed only by disciplines of the religious sciences but not by disciplines outside the religious sciences, is addressed by al-Jurjānī: "Since it is not possible for its principles to be investigated in a superior science that is not a religious science (*sharʿī*) otherwise, the highest of the religious sciences would be dependent on a superior science that falls outside the religious sciences" (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 1:49). It follows then that the subject matter of *kalām* must include the discussion of such entities. For al-Ījī, this argument provides the rationale for including these entities, and their corresponding counterparts in *falsafa* natural philosophy, into the content of *kalām*.

Al-Ījī notes another view on the content of *kalām*: "It is said that the content of *kalām* is the existing thing qua existing thing (*al-mawjūd bimā huwa mawjūd*)" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 7). This view was held by al-Ghazālī (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 1:53; al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 1:12–13). Proponents of this view add the qualification "in accordance with Islamic principles" (*ʿalā qānūn al-islām*) so as to distinguish the *kalām* investigation into the existing thing qua existing thing from that of *falsafa* metaphysics (literally "Divine science" (*al-ilāhī*), which, in Ibn Sīnā's formulation, also investigates "the existing thing *qua* existing thing" (Ibn Sīnā, *Metaphysics*, 9).[3] While this broader view of the content of *kalām* seems to allow the investigation of entities such as atoms and accidents, al-Ījī nevertheless regards it as deficient. He notes that the content of *kalām* is broader than "the existing thing qua existing thing" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 8). *Kalām* also investigates entities that are not "existing things," namely the nonexistent (*maʿdūm*) and intermediary state (*ḥāl*) as well as mental entities such as reason (*naẓar*) or proof (*dalīl*). Since *falsafa* affirms mental existence, these entities can be investigated by *falsafa* metaphysics as *mental entities* and therefore it can include them in its investigation of "the existing thing qua existing thing," albeit as a mental existent. But *kalām* denies mental existence and therefore cannot investigate them qua existing things. It follows then that the content of *kalām* must be broader than "the existing thing qua existing thing." Al-Ījī also rejects the qualification that *kalām* investigates "the existing thing qua existing thing" in "accordance with Islamic principles." He argues that this qualification restricts the subject matter of *kalām* to "what is the truth (*ḥaqq*) regarding these questions," presumably because investigation in accordance with Islamic principles must yield "the truth." But this qualification implies that investigation into what is erroneous falls outside the content of *kalām*, such as *kalām*'s discussion of materialists who claim that God is a body, or of those who claim that anthropomorphic attributes must be accepted "without asking how," or of the innovations of the rival *kalām* school of the Mu'tazila. Al-Ījī asserts that even the investigation of these erroneous positions falls within the content of *kalām* (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 8; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 1:54).

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[3] Al-Jurjānī's comment on this point is ironic—if *kalām* investigates according to Islamic principles, then the investigation of First Philosophy must be according to intellectual principles of those engaged in First Philosophy, whether or not these principles accord with Islamic principles or are contrary to it! (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 1:53).

Al-Ījī does not provide a clear statement of the content of *kalām*. Nevertheless, he clearly rejects a restrictive and theologically oriented enterprise. The unstated but clear conclusion is that the content of *kalām* consists of the "the existing thing qua existing thing" that is the subject of *falsafa* metaphysics, and it consists of atoms/substances, accidents, and related topics that are the subject of *falsafa* natural philosophy, and more. It is this entirety of subject matter that constitutes the discussion of the rest of the Stations of *al-Mawāqif*.

17.1. ONTOLOGY

The Second Station of *al-Mawāqif*, which is on common notions, commences with a section on existence and nonexistence. Here, al-Ījī introduces the concept of *ḥāl* (literally meaning "state" but translated here as "intermediate state," the reason for which will soon become evident), which had vexed the *mutakallimūn* (Gimaret 1970; Frank 1986). Befitting the logical and systematic presentation of a curricular text, al-Ījī states that for the *mutakallimūn*, the objects of knowledge (*maʿlūmāt*) comprise those that are nonexistent (*maʿdūm*), those that are existent (*mawjūd*), and according to some, those that are in an intermediary state (*ḥāl*), between the nonexistent and the existent. This results in four positions: The first position, held by most Ashʿarīs (who are called *ahl al-ḥaqq*, those who hold the true or correct view), asserts that neither the nonexistent nor the intermediary state have reality (*lahu taḥqīq, taḥaqquq*); that is to say, only existents are real. Thus, this position holds that to be real is to be instantiated as a concrete particular in the external world. The second position, attributed to al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwaynī, agrees that the nonexistent has no reality, but holds that both the intermediary state and the existent are real (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 41, 57; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:64). The existent is self-subsistent, while the intermediary state is dependent on something else, namely the existent. Moreover, the intermediary state is "an attribute of an existent, but [itself] is neither an existent nor a nonexistent" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 41). In his comments, al-Jurjānī provides examples of intermediary states as attributes, such as being an atom (*jawhariyya*), blackness (*sawādiyya*), and whiteness (*bayāḍiyya*) (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:65). These attributes, al-Jurjānī explains, are determinants that make the existents they are attributes of (such as atom, black, or white) have their characteristic properties ("being an atom" etc.). These attributes of identity are unlike other attributes that result from the inherence of accidents, such as the accident red that inheres in the red atom. As attributes of identity, intermediary states are real, but their existence is conditional—they are dependent on the existent of which they are attributes. The inherent accident is a real existent, albeit inherent. It is not an intermediary state. The third position, held by most Mu'tazila, asserts that the nonexistent has reality (thereby the Muʿtazila assert that "the nonexistent is a thing"), but the intermediary state does not. For the Muʿtazila, only the impossible (*manfī, mumtaniʿ*) cannot be real. However, the nonexistent is a possible entity (*mumkin*) even if it may not be found among the concrete particulars in the world (*aʿyān*) (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 41; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:65). Finally, the fourth position ascribed to "some of the Muʿtazila" (clearly Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī and his followers) holds that all three, the nonexistent, existent, and intermediary state, are real (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 42, 57).

This systematic presentation of four *kalām* positions on the intermediary state does not engage with the historical contestation among the Ashʿarīs, evident in the texts of al-Bāqillānī, al-Juwaynī, and al-Shahrastānī, among others (Gimaret 1970, 75–80). Moreover, Abū Hāshim's position, albeit notorious for its obscurity, is merely mentioned by al-Ījī. Its origin as a solution to the problem of God's names and attributes is entirely absent, as it is in al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwaynī (Gimaret 1970, 49–54; al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 230–33; al-Juwaynī, *Shāmil*, 629–40). The discussion of the intermediate state is an example of how al-Ījī, and before him al-Bayḍāwī and others, reframed the exposition of classical *kalām* through their emulation of *falsafa*'s systematic presentation of subject matter, and their appropriation of its analytical framework and technical vocabulary.

Turning to the philosophers (*ḥukamā'*), al-Ījī states that they hold that the mental object lacking reality, namely instantiation as a concrete particular in the external world, is the nonexistent, while the existent is real.[4] If the existent is an individual (*bi-huwiyya shakhṣiyya*), it exists externally in the world (instantiated as a concrete particular); otherwise it is a mental existent (*mawjūd dhihnī*). The concrete particular whose nonexistence is impossible is the necessarily existent (*al-wājib li-dhātihi*); otherwise it is the possibly existent (*al-mumkin li-dhātihi*). The possibly existent exists either in a subject, that is to say it inheres in a substrate—this is the accident (*ʿaraḍ*)—or it subsists in itself and this is substance (*jawhar*). However, al-Ījī cautions the reader that for the philosophers, form (*ṣura*) is also a substance even though it subsists in a substrate, which is matter (*mādda*), rather than being self-subsistent (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 42).

Since the *mutakallimūn* reject mental existence, they hold that all existents must have external instantiation. The existent that has a temporal beginning (that is to say, it came into existence at some time and before this time did not exist) is the originated existent (*ḥādith*), while the existent without temporal beginning is God who is eternal (*al-qadīm*). The originated existent is either space-occupying (*mutaḥayyiz*), or is inherent in what is space-occupying, or is neither space-occupying nor inherent in it. The space-occupying existent is the atom (*jawhar*), and the inherent existent is the accident (*ʿaraḍ*). Al-Ījī states, "We hold that an existent that is neither space-occupying nor inherent in it does not exist. However, among them are those who are persuaded regarding its existence, but others are certain of its impossibility." It would seem that by "them," al-Ījī has some *mutakallimūn* in mind. Al-Jurjānī remarks that this kind of existent is noncorporeal or separated from matter (*al-mujarrad*); namely, it comprises the separated noncorporeal intellects and souls of *falsafa* metaphysics. But, he continues, "We do not find any evidence (*dalīl*) [for its existence or nonexistence]; it may exist (*yakūna mawjudan*), but if it does not, its existence is either possible or impossible" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 42; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:75). Thus, unlike al-Ījī's categorical assertion "We hold . . . it does not exist," al-Jurjānī leaves the possibility of the existence of such nonmaterial entities open, straddling a middle line between the *falsafa* affirmation of such existents and the *kalām* denial of them.

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[4] Al-Ījī does not comment on the lack of the intermediate state among the philosophers. Gimaret remarks that the sense of the intermediate state as an attribute of identity (being an atom etc.) and thereby as a constituent of the existent, it is equivalent to quiddity (*māhiyya*), even though this *falsafa* term is not found in the texts of classical *kalām* (Gimaret 1970, 61, 82n31).

17.2. Essence and Existence

In the account of the ontology of the philosophers, al-Ījī mentions their classification of what exists into the necessarily existent and possibly existent. There can be little doubt that for al-Ījī, this formulation derived from Ibn Sīnā, although the term "necessarily existent" (*wājib al-wujūd*) is found in pre-Avicennan *kalām* texts.[5] In one formulation, Ibn Sīnā states that since the essence (or quiddity *māhiyya*) of the possibly existent is insufficient for its existence—it cannot exist in itself—its existence must derive from another (Ibn Sīnā, *Metaphysics*, 31). However, for the necessarily existent, its essence is sufficient for its existence; hence it exists in itself. Moreover, Ibn Sīnā sometimes seems to assert priority of essence over existence. This essence-existence distinction and related notions of necessarily existent and possibly existent became, as Robert Wisnovsky has shown, a major topic of post-Avicennan discourse among the *mutakallimūn* but also among the *falāsifa* such as al-Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā (Wisnovsky 2013).

In *al-Mawāqif,* the discussion of the essence-existence distinction occurs in the Second Station in the section titled "Is Existence Identical to Essence (*māhiyya*) or Is It Part of Essence or Is It Additional to Essence?" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 48–52). Al-Ījī mentions three responses. The first response, which claims that existence is identical to essence for both necessarily existent and possibly existent, is attributed to al-Ashʿarī and the eleventh-century Mu'tazilī Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī.[6] Their arguments are based on the absurdity that arises from asserting that existence is additional to essence, namely, it entails prior existence of essence.

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[5] Robert Wisnovsky mentions the use of *wujūb al-wujūd* by the Muʿtazilī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024) and by the Ashʿarī al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 502/1108) (Wisnovsky 2004, 87–88). *Wājib al-wujūd* is also found in *Ziyādāt al-sharḥ* by the Zaydī imam al-Nāṭiq bi-l-ḥaqq Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Hārūn al-Buthānī (d. 424/1033), which is a commentary on the *Sharḥ uṣūl al-khamsa* of Ibn Khallād (fl. ca. 330/941) (Adang, Madelung, and Schmidtke 2011, 44, 249).

[6] Al-Ashʿarī would obviously not have posed the question in this form, as it has no place in his conceptual framework, nor is the term *māhiyya* (essence) part of his technical lexicon. However, al-Ījī (and before him al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 88) have reframed al-Ashʿarī's views on the attribute of existence

The second response, attributed to the philosophers, asserts that existence is identical to essence for the necessarily existent but is additional to essence for the possibly existent. In al-Ījī's formulation, their argument states: if existence were to subsist in essence (rather than be identical to it), then essence would need to be prior to existence, and this priority would have to be realized through a prior existence of the essence, which is absurd. Therefore, the philosophers concluded, existence is identical to essence for the necessarily existent. But, al-Ījī objects, the philosophers assert the priority of essence to existence for the possibly existent without requiring that it be realized through prior existence. So how can they claim the absurdity of such priority for the necessarily existent? Moreover, for compound essences such as the human, for example, whose essence is "rational animal," the parts constituting essence—difference as in "rational" and genus as in "animal"—are both prior to the essence of the whole. However, the priority of these parts to the essence of the whole is not achieved through the parts having prior existence (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 48–49; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:137–41). In both counterexamples, the absurdity of prior existence of essence does not arise. So why is it asserted in the case of the essence of the necessarily existent?

The third response holds that existence is additional to essence for both, necessarily existent and possibly existent. Neither al-Ījī nor al-Jurjānī attribute this position to any person or a group; however, it had been previously discussed by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyya* (al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 1:23–24, 1:30–41). Al-Ījī first takes up the claim that existence is additional to essence for possibly existents, which, as stated above, was the position of the philosophers. Al-Ījī rejects this claim in his critique (*taḥqīq*). He grants that two distinct objects of knowledge (*mafhūmayn*), essence and existence, are predicated of the same concrete individual. However, he argues, these two objects of knowledge do not have distinct individual identities (*huwiyyatān mutamayyizatān*), one subsisting in the other. Were individual identity predicated of essence but denied for existence, essence would need prior existence in order for existence to then subsist in it. This, al-Ījī remarks, is the absurdity that al-Ashʿarī had raised in his argument for the first response. Al-Ījī continues that even though the philosophers admit mental existence, they concur that for concrete individuals, essence is not distinct from existence. Al-Jurjānī further explains that this distinction arises from the mental act of examining the concrete individual and mentally separating essence from external existence. This echoes al-Ījī's note that in the *Shifā'*, Ibn Sīnā had stated that existence is a secondary intelligible, that is to say, the result of mental deliberation. Therefore, al-Ījī concludes, the dispute over whether, for the possibly existent, existence is additional to essence boils down to a dispute over mental existence (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 49–50; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:141–55). That is to say, al-Jurjānī clarifies, "Those

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(*ṣifat al-wujūd*) and essential attribute or attribute of identity (*ṣifat al-dhāt, ṣifat al-nafs*) into their conceptual framework and using their technical lexicon, which is clearly influenced by *falsafa*.

who do not affirm mental existence, such as al-Ashʿarī, believe that external existence is, without exception, identical to essence, while those who affirm mental existence believe that in the mind, external existence is additional to essence. However, among the moderns, [there are] those who claim that existence is additional to essence but who yet deny mental existence. [They] are misguided about their claim" (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:155).

Al-Ījī next turns to the claim that existence is additional to essence for the necessarily existent. He discusses two supporting arguments in detail. The first states that if existence of the necessarily existent is not concomitant with essence but rather the necessarily existent is pure existence by itself, then the essence of the necessarily existent would in fact be identical to this pure existence by itself. The fact of being pure existence by itself is either due to existence, in which case all existence would be pure existence by itself (thus even the possibly existent would be pure existence by itself, and this is absurd), or due to something else. This too is absurd because the necessarily existent is independent of anything else and as such its existence cannot be due to something else. It follows that for the necessarily existent, existence is not pure existence by itself but is concomitant to, that is to say, additional to essence (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 51; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:156; al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 1:31). The second argument states that the necessarily existent is the originator (*mubdi'*) of the existence of all possibly existents. If the necessarily existent were pure existence by itself, then the originator of possibly existents is either existence without further qualification, or existence further qualified as pure existence by itself. The first implies that every existing thing qua existence is the originator of everything that the necessarily existent originates, even of itself! This is absurd. The second implies that the originator is pure existence by itself, and therefore pure existence is a part of the originator of existence, that is to say its cause (*fa'iluhu*). This is patently absurd (al-Ījī *Mawāqif*, 51; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:156–58; al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith*, 1:35). It follows then that the necessarily existent is not pure existence by itself but is existence additional to its essence.

Al-Ījī notes that a scholar (*ba'ḍ al-fuḍalā'*) had defended the third response differently, stating that the dispute is not about existence in general, which is common to all existents, but rather is specifically about the existence of the necessarily existent, namely whether its existence is identical to its essence or additional to it. It is generally accepted, the scholar claimed, that its existence is not additional to its essence. Rather, it is held that the necessarily existent is pure existence and originator of possibly existents. However, from the perspective of participating as a concrete existent in the world that is known, the existence of the necessarily existent must be additional to its essence. The reason for this, which is not clearly stated, is what distinguishes concrete individuals from mental existents is that the former have both essence and existence, while the latter are only universal essences. How could the necessarily existent be known mentally if it were a pure existent without essence? Al-Ījī rejects this vehemently: "This does not cure disease! He is granting that through participation in concrete existence, existence befalls to God's essence, just as it befalls the essence of possibly existents. Therefore there is no difference [between them]!" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 51; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 2:158–59). Al-Ījī continues, "He has not provided proof for this, nor has anyone professed this view!"

Al-Ījī contends that what is at issue regarding this question is that existence, when predicated of particular individuals, is equivocal, while essence, or parts of essence when predicated of particular individuals, remains the same for all instantiations. With regards to the necessarily existent, existence is "more appropriate, temporally precedent, and more intense." Existence, for the necessarily existent, entails it is pure existence in itself and originator of possibly existents. But existence, for possibly existents, does not share these characteristics.

The examination of the distinction between essence and existence and the question of the priority of the one over the other is a topic that is not found in the exposition of classical *kalām*. It belongs to postclassical *kalām*, influenced as it by the conceptual framework and technical language of Avicenna. That is not to say that the Avicennan formulation was received without question. Rather it was appropriated, and as such merited critique, questioning, and refinement. While al-Ījī's examination benefited from the previous scholarship of authors like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, it is nonetheless characteristically his own. Even though al-Ījī does not indicate a preference for one of the three responses that he discusses, it is clear from his analysis that if, as a *mutakallim*, one were to deny mental existence, then the first response, attributed to al-Ashʿarī, is the preferred position.

17.3. Atomism

Classical *kalām* had embraced an atomistic cosmology, refining it over the course of the eighth to eleventh centuries CE, establishing what Abdel Hamid Sabra has characterized as "an alternative philosophy to Hellenizing *falsafa*" (Sabra 2006, 199). In a long discussion in the *Physics* of the *Shifāʾ*, Ibn Sīnā critiqued the arguments adduced by the *mutakallimūn* in support of atomism, thereby forcing post-Avicennan *mutakallimūn* to either respond to his critique or abandon atomism (Marmura 1991–92; Lettinck 1999; Ibn Sīnā, *Physics*, 2:273–319). The role of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī is significant for the continuation of atomism in post-Avicennan Sunnī *kalām*. He embraced Ibn Sīnā's antiatomist arguments in his early *falsafa*-oriented writings such as *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyya*, but he reversed this position in his later *kalām* writings such as *al-Arbāʿīn fī uṣul al-dīn, Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa l-mutaʾakhkharīn*, and *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliyya*, in which he refuted these antiatomist arguments and adduced additional arguments in support of atomism. Thus Ibn Sīnā's arguments against atomism and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's reversal and then defense of atomism form the backdrop to al-Ījī's discussion of atomism (Dhanani 2015).

The constitution of bodies, which includes the view that they are constituted from indivisible atoms, is found in the Fourth Station of *al-Mawāqif*—"On *jawāhir*." The term *jawhar* (plural *jawāhir*) can refer to both the substances of *falsafa* and to the space-occupying bodies or atoms of *kalām*. Al-Ījī begins by presenting the contrasting positions of these two disciplines:

> The philosophers hold that *jawhar*, if it inheres [in a substrate], is form (*ṣūra*), or if it is the substrate in which the form inheres, then it is matter (*hayūlā*), or if it is a combination of them both, then it is body (*jism*), or if it is attached to the body in the manner of governance (*tadabbur*) and the exercise of independent action (*taṣarruf*), then it is soul; otherwise it is intellect. This position is based on the denial of atomism . . . the *mutakallimūn* hold that *jawhar* is nothing but that which is space-occupying (*mutaḥayyiz*), as mentioned previously. If the space-occupying object is capable of division, then it is body (*jism*) but if it is incapable of further division, then it is the atom (*jawhar fard*). (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 182; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 6:285–88)

After these remarks on the different usages of the term *jawhar* by *falsafa* and *kalām*, al-Ījī turns to examine the nature of body and its parts. He states that the divisible body is constituted from parts that are either actual or potential, and finite or infinite. The four resulting positions are the *kalām* position that its parts are actual and finite; the position attributed to the early *mutakallim* al-Naẓẓām that its parts are actual but infinite; the position attributed to the *mutakallim* al-Shāhrastānī (d. 548/1153) that its parts are potential and finite; and the position of the philosophers that its parts are potential but infinite (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 186; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:6–8). Having set the stage, al-Ījī turns to the arguments of the *mutakallimūn* in support of atomism. In the first set of these arguments, al-Ījī asserts, "We will first show that every divisible body (*munqasim*) has actual parts, and then we will show that these parts are finite," and in the second set, "We will directly show that bodies are constituted out of atoms" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 186–87).

The first argument of the first set states, "If the body capable of division (*al-qābil al-qisma*) were a unity/whole (*wāḥid*), this would entail division of what is one, but the consequence is false" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 187), and therefore, it follows, the antecedent, namely that body capable of division being a unity, must be false. This odd formulation betrays one of al-Ījī's sources for his discussion of atomism, namely Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Muḥaṣṣal*. In this work, al-Rāzī's discussion of arguments in support of atomism had begun with the claim of the existence of indivisible magnitudes such as the point (acknowledged by all—*bi l-ittifāq*) or motion at an instant (*fī l-ḥāḍir*) or the instant itself, which respectively aggregate to constitute the line, motion over a spatial span, and the temporal interval. He next turned to a familiar argument to show that the through-and-through division of body results in indivisible parts, namely the argument of half-distances for completing motion over a spatial span; that is, in order to traverse the span, one must have traverse its half, and then the half of this, and so on. This series must terminate for the traversal to complete in finite time, and this entails that the spatial span is constituted from indivisible parts, namely atoms (al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal*, 116–17; Dhanani 1994, 160–62). However, al-Rāzī had mentioned an objection to this argument that the necessity of completing the motion in finite time entails the denial of its infinite divisibility. Proponents of this objection wanted to draw a distinction between actual division and potential division. To defend against this objection, al-Rāzī analyzed the notion of unity or wholeness (*waḥda*) and questioned the validity of the assertion that what has unity is capable of division. It is clear that al-Ījī was aware of al-Rāzī's discussion and aimed to provide his readers a more cogent arrangement in his treatment of atomism.

Al-Ījī's goal in the first three arguments is to refute the claim that body is a unity capable of infinite division, and thereby to establish that a body is actually a composite divisible into its distinct parts. The third argument, for example, states:

> The traversal of the parts (of a spatial span) makes them actually distinct. Thus if traversing half of the interval is different from traversing a third of the interval, then so is the case with fourth of the interval, fifth of the interval, and so on. This entails that the parts are actually distinct. (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 187; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:10)

Having established, by these arguments, that the body is divisible into distinct actual parts, al-Ījī turns next to arguments that establish that these parts are finite. The first of these arguments asserts that traversal over a spatial span composed of infinite parts in a finite time is impossible. This argument is also found in al-Rāzī's *Muḥaṣṣal* (117). However, al-Ījī's other two arguments are not found in the *Muḥaṣṣal*. The first of these is the terse assertion that the body is "that which is confined (*maḥṣūr*) between two extremities (*ṭarafayn*), but it is impossible (*muḥāl*) to confine the infinite between two extremities" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 187; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:12). The origin of this argument is al-Rāzī's *Maṭālib al-ʿāliyya*:

> A body, finite in bulk (*hajm*) and measure (*miqdār*), has two extremities (*ṭarafayn*) and is contained by two sides (*jānibān*). If that which lies between these two extremities or sides were infinite, then the infinite would be contained by two confining edges (*ḥāṣirayn*), and this is intuitively absurd (*muḥāl bi l-badīhah*). (al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib*, 6:73)

The similarity between al-Ījī's terse prose and al-Rāzī's argument is evident.

Al-Ījī's second argument for the finitude of parts of body is based on the observation that the combination (*ta'līf*) of bodies always produces an increase in the bulk (*ḥajm*) of the resulting body. The question then is, is the increase in bulk due to the addition of finite or infinite parts? If body has finite bulk but infinite parts, then how can we conceptualize the proportion (*nisba*) of parts to parts, namely, the parts of the original body with finite bulk to the parts of the combined body that also has finite bulk? Cleary the proportion of the original bulk to the combined bulk, both of which are finite and therefore so is their proportion, must correspond to the proportion of the original number of parts to the combined number of parts. But how can we calculate a proportion of parts to parts when the parts are infinite? (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 187; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:12–21). This argument also derives from al-Rāzī's *Maṭālib al-ʿāliyya* (6:72).

Several arguments are included in al-Ījī's second set of arguments to show that bodies are constituted from atoms (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 188–89; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:14–14). The first asserts that there must be an existent which "has position" (*dhū waḍʿ*) and then argues that that which has position must be indivisible—this is the point that constitutes lines that constitute surfaces that constitute bodies; the second asserts that motion must either be past motion, motion at the present instant (*ḥāḍira*), or future motion. Only motion in the present instant properly exists (the past existed, but does not now exist, and the future does not now exist but will exist), and this motion is indivisible (*lā tanqasim*). Thus motion is constituted out of indivisibles of motion and so is the spatial interval whose indivisibles correspond to the space traversed during indivisibles of motion. Both of these arguments derive from al-Rāzī (al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal*, 116–17). The third argument derives from geometry and claims that Euclid's demonstration (*burḥān*) of the existence of a smallest angle must entail the existence of the atom. This claim derives from the commentary of al-Nayrīzī (d. ca. 310/922) on Euclid's *Elements* where he had stated that the horn angle, formed between the circle and a tangent to it, is "smaller than any acute angle because it is invisible" (*li-annahu ghayr munqasim*) (Dhanani 1994, 148–50). The fourth argument, also from geometry, asserts that the point of contact between a perfect sphere and level surface is an indivisible point. The fifth argument examines the intersection of two perpendicular lines, and claims that this intersection occurs at an indivisible point, and that such points constitute lines, which constitute surfaces, which constitute bodies, hence establishing that bodies are constituted out of indivisibles.[7] The sixth and seventh arguments are the familiar *kalām* claims that if division were to not terminate with indivisible atoms, then the parts of the heavens (*samāʾ*) and the parts of a mustard seed (*khardala*) would potentially be equal, and this is false (*buht*), or the parts of a mustard seed would cover the surface of the earth and this is false (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 188–89; al-Rāzī, *Maṭālib*, 6:75).

Al-Ījī concludes these arguments in support of atomism with the remark, "Even though there are dialectical responses (*jawāb jadalan*) to some[8] of these proofs, the author (*al-musannif*) is satisfied with them" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 189). Al-Jurjānī's comment is telling "and [he has] confidence [in them]. However, you [reader], should judge for yourself, the validity of the answers that have been mentioned" (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:21). This is a reference to the fact that in his comments on each of these arguments, al-Jurjānī mentions the responses and refutations of opponents of atomism to each of al-Ījī's arguments. But even though al-Ījī does not discuss objections or refutations to these arguments by proponents of atomism, he does discuss "the proofs of the philosophers that assert that the body is a continuous whole capable of infinite division, and that it is not composed of atoms." These arguments are categorized as those based on position (*muḥādhāh*), on contact (*mumāsa*), on speed, and geometrical figures (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 189–93; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:21–32; Dhanani 1994, 167–81). Al-Ījī does not refute or raise objections to any of these arguments.

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[7] I have not been able to find al-Ījī's source for this argument, and it is perhaps original to him, although in a general sense it belongs to the *kalām* theory of lines constituted out of atoms, surfaces out of lines, and bodies out of surfaces (on this see Dhanani 1994, 95–97).

[8] Reading *baʿḍ* instead of *naqḍ*, as in al-Jurjānī (*Sharḥ*, 7:21).

17.4. Celestial Spheres

The discussion on atomism at the beginning of the Fourth Station of *al-Mawāqif* forms an introduction to the examination of bodies, beginning with their constitution and continuing on to the investigation of bodies, simple and complex, inanimate and animate—this constitutes the rest of the discussion in the Fourth Station. Within this framework, the discussion of celestial spheres (*aflāk*) belongs to one of the two categories of simple bodies, the other being the terrestrial elements of fire, air, water, and earth. The properties and phenomena related to celestial spheres constitute the subject matter of astronomy but also include the doctrines of emanation and of celestial influences on terrestrial events—doctrines that are central to *falsafa* metaphysics. Both of these aspects are discussed by al-Ījī in *al-Mawāqif*, but the focus here will be on its astronomical aspect.

The technical astronomical descriptions in *al-Mawāqif* are comprehensive. The descriptions are purely astronomical—nothing in them reflects an alternative *kalām* view of astronomy. Nevertheless, al-Ījī is not really committed to these astronomical descriptions, and at several points in his discussion, he criticizes the theoretical constructs of astronomy and in particular its reliance on "natural" causation and mathematical abstraction rather than recognizing that the celestial realm contains signs of God's design, and that the regularity of its motions result from voluntary divine agency, that is to say, they flow from God's habitual course of action.

After a detailed description of the numbers and types of celestial spheres that are known through differences in their movements discovered through observation and their order of arrangement that is deduced from what is in a lower celestial sphere concealing what is in a higher celestial sphere, al-Ījī's skeptical attitude toward this most successful of the predictive mathematical sciences emerges. He mentions disagreements and alternative views among astronomers and competing hypotheses:

> Some of the geometricians [that is, astronomers] (*muḥandisīn*) claimed that the sphere of Venus was above the sphere of the Sun, but Ibn Sīnā asserted this was false, claiming that he had seen Venus as if it were a mole on the face of the Sun. (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 200; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:80–81)
>
> Their construction [of the spheres and their arrangement] is based on the principle that the spheres are impenetrable; otherwise it would be possible for motions to belong to planets themselves, as [if they were] swimmers in water. If this is granted, then why is not possible for planets to be [studded] upon belts that are in motion, either by themselves or through the impetus of the planets upon them? (al-Jurjānī's gloss adds: *so that these belts are all embedded on the sphere at different places*). This [view] is not any more far-fetched than [the construct of] the eccentric [sphere *al-khārij*] or its two complements. Moreover, why is it not possible for the outermost [celestial sphere] to have a motion different from each of the others so that it has daily motion and this takes away from the need to establish the nine [celestial spheres]?

> Why is it not possible for each of the fixed stars to be in [its own] celestial sphere? The rest of the relationships (*of the fixed stars to each other with regards to their closeness, distance or orientation*) are not useful for determining [whether the fixed stars are all on one sphere or can be on their own sphere] due to the possibility of their having the same motion [in either case]. Why is it not possible for some of the fixed stars to be below the spheres of the planets? (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 201; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:81–82)

Such remarks purport to show that the certainty with which the philosophers or the astronomers pronounce their theories about the heavens is misplaced. Their claims must be viewed skeptically.

Another example is the philosophers' claim that the celestial sphere contains the principle of inclination to circular motion (*mayl mustadīr*), and that all its parts are similar in having this principle. But its motion is such that the sphere has two stationary poles, and circles with different motions, some fast and others slow. Thus despite the homogeneity of its parts, such distinctions are present in the celestial sphere but, it is claimed, they occur without any reason for giving preponderance to one of its points over another, or one circle over another—an objection that had previously been made by al-Ghazālī in his critique of the *falāsifa* (al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 25–26). Al-Ījī objects that one cannot accept the claim these distinctions are somehow necessitated essentially. He asserts, "There can be no specification (*takhṣīṣ*) [of one choice among many] without [the presence of] an agent giving preponderance (*murrajiḥ*)," that is, through an act of willful choice. Al-Ījī's critique of causation and design concludes with the remark, "Since in the end one has to revert to the act of a willing agent, whether the philosophers acknowledge this or not, many of their burdens are eased" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 204; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:97). Hence, al-Ījī does not need to dispute the observed motions of celestial bodies. His dispute is with claims of causation and agency and that mathematical models represent the actual physical structure of the celestial region. He is committed to the view that causation and agency are divine and that the regularity of celestial motions arises out of God's habitual course of action. This is also evident in his critique of planetary models, which derives from the astronomers' critique of Ptolemy's use of the equant:

> Know that when the philosophers came to firmly believe that the motions of the celestial spheres must be circular, they became confused about the principle for these differences (al-Jurjānī adds: *which are known as a result of observation or measurement*). They did not engage in a (*thorough and*) clear (*discussion*) regarding the principle. Later, the (*planetary model*) of the spheres of Mercury, which we have previously described, heaped destruction on their foundational principles. They required the motion of the center of the epicycle to resemble motion around the center of the deferent, but the result of observation using instruments does not agree [with this]. Rather, the resemblance was found at a point (*that is to say, the motion of the center of the epicycle was found to be similar around a different point*) called the equant, which is between the center of the world and the center of the eccentric . . . *the difficulty mentioned about the superior celestial spheres and Venus is similar*). Moreover, regarding the universal [principle] (*in their view*) that the motions of

> the celestial spheres are voluntary, what prevents [them from asserting] that (*these motions*) are different because they arise from successive particular voluntary acts? But you have already learned that Universal Intellection (*al-taʿaqull al-kullī*) is incapable of particular motion![9] The truth [in these matters] is to deny all this and to resort to the Agent who acts out of choice (*al-qādir al-mukhtār*)! (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 212–13; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:133)

17.5. SOULS AND INTELLECTS

The account of soul is found in the Fourth Station of *al-Mawāqif* in two places, first in the discussion of compound bodies as an emergent phenomenon and then in the section (*marṣad*) on soul as an incorporeal entity. The account al-Ījī gives is the philosophers' view of soul, as soul has no place in the ontology of *kalām*. As one would expect, al-Ījī is critical of the philosophers' claims.

In his account of the philosophers' view on soul, al-Ījī categorizes the three kinds of soul (*nafs)*—plant, animal, and human—and provides a definition of soul as an emergent phenomenon of the natural body. Soul is

> the first perfection of a natural body having instruments (namely, organs) as a result of which it is capable of nourishment and growth, or sensation and voluntary motion, or conceiving universals and discovery through practical reasoning (*raʾy*). (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 229)

However, al-Ījī acknowledges a significant and deliberate omission here, namely of the souls of celestial spheres, which, in the Neoplatonist scheme of the philosophers, were alive, discerning, and influenced events in the terrestrial ream (Dhanani 2003):

> This definition does not include souls of celestial spheres because of what you already know, that is, we designate them [namely, plant, animal, and human souls] with the term "soul" by virtue of their [capability for] varying effects, but this is not the case with celestial spheres. We do not know of any description that encompasses [all of] them (al-Jurjānī's gloss adds: *that is, encompasses the three of them, plant soul, animal soul, and the soul of celestial spheres*). Were we to say that soul is the principle for the effects [produced by these bodies], then every capability, even natural capability would be a soul. [On the other hand], were we to qualify them [namely, these effects] as intentional, then plant souls would be excluded. (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 230; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:174)

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[9] Here al-Ījī is criticizing the view of the philosophers that the Universal Intellect can only conceive universals (and therefore only of "universal intellection") but is incapable of conceiving particulars, and therefore cannot presumably engage in particular voluntary motions of the kind al-Ījī is proposing.

The discussion of the philosophers' view on plant soul is an account of the capabilities of the plant soul, namely nutrition, growth, and preservation of the species through reproduction. It also includes a detailed account of the process of digestion and its role in growing and sustaining the body. Nevertheless, al-Ījī rejects the claim that these phenomena are "natural," namely they are the result of natural properties or are produced by the soul. Rather, they arise from the purposive activity of a divine agent:

> What is observed regarding these kinds of (al-Jurjānī glosses: *signs of wise design and*) usefulness, have perplexed and weakened (*intellects and*) minds. Civilizations have transmitted knowledge about them (*that is, about these signs of wise design and usefulness*), [to us] as is known (*from books that record the usefulness of the animal organs, their shapes, their sizes, and their locations*)[10] [in] five thousand [books]. Yet what is not known (*about them*) is even greater (*than what is known, as is evident to any sound mind*). What becomes known (*through such an examination [of natural signs]*) is immediate knowledge, free from doubt, incapable of refutation. These (*that is to say, the above-mentioned matters*) do not arise except through [the activity of an agent] who is knowing (*whose knowledge is all-encompassing*), who is aware (*of the invisible aspects of things and what is hidden about them*), who is wise (*whose actions certainly correspond to the utility for which the composition of these things is what it is*), who is powerful (*over everything that He wishes*), as it is stated in the Qurʾān, in many places in the form of evident proofs (*of the majesty of creation and its perfection*), among them "He is the one who fashions you in wombs as He pleases" (4:6). (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 234; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:196)

Following a similar detailed account of the philosophers' view of the animal soul, that is, the five external senses (vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), the five internal senses (the common sense, retentive imagination, estimation, memory, and compositive imagination), and the capacity for emotions such as desire and anger and for voluntary motion, al-Ījī concludes, "Most of what is said about these faculties is based on the [philosophers'] denial of the willing agent and [their view] that the soul is incapable of perceiving particulars" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 235–41; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:199–218).

The account of the philosophers' discussion of soul as an emergent property of natural bodies concludes with unexpectedly brief and seemingly short discussion of the human soul:

> The third division [of types of soul] is the human soul. Its capabilities are called mental faculties (*al-quwwa al-ʿaqliyya*). From the aspect of its perception of universals and making positive or negative judgments about them, it is known as the reflective faculty (*al-quwwa al-naẓariyya*), and from the aspect of its discovery of universals for [the benefit] of the speculative disciplines (*al-ṣināʿāt al-fikriyya*) and their pursuit of practical reasoning and consultation (*mashwara*) it is known as the practical faculty (*al-quwwa al-ʿamaliyya*). Affective states arise in the soul as a result of the

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[10] This refers to Galen's well-known *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* translated into Arabic by Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq.

> practical faculty such as laughter, shame, bashfulness and the like. (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 241–42; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:219)

But al-Ījī returns to a second examination of soul in a section (*marṣad*) devoted to soul in which he investigates the philosophers' claims of its incorporeality. Here, the claims of the incorporeality both of the souls of celestial spheres and of the human soul are examined.

The philosophers claim that celestial spheres have souls that are separated from bodies, that is to say, they are incorporeal (*mujarrad*). This claim of incorporeality is made on the grounds that the motions of the celestial spheres are voluntary (al-Ījī's earlier rejection of this has been discussed above) and therefore their souls are incorporeal (al-Ījī *Mawāqif*, 257; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:252). The argument in support of this claim that their motion is voluntary is by exclusion; namely, since these motions are neither natural nor forced, they must be voluntary. The argument for the claim that these voluntary motions entail incorporeal souls is more complex. That animal souls have the capability of voluntary motion has already been granted in the discussion of their capabilities. Here, in this argument, the distinction is made between voluntary motions of animal souls and of celestial souls. For animal souls, voluntary motions are said to arise from pure imagination. This cannot be the case with voluntary motions of celestial souls because their motions persist in the same manner eon after eon, without change. Therefore, they must be the result of universal intellection of the Universal Intellect, which, the philosophers claim, is incorporeal.

Al-Ījī counters with several terse objections. He rejects the claims that the motions of celestial spheres cannot be natural or cannot be forced or that imagination cannot effect voluntary motions in the same manner without change. Why, he asks, should the imagination of celestial spheres be similar to our imagination, which does not effect voluntary motions in the same manner? Al-Ījī also rejects the claim that the Universal Intellect is incorporeal (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 257; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:253).

The question of incorporeality is taken up in the section on intellect (*ʿaql*). Al-Jurjānī's prefaces this discussion with a gloss describing intellect: "What is meant by it, as has been mentioned previously, is [it is] a possible existent that is neither body nor something inherent in it nor a part of it, but it is a self-subsistent incorporeal substance (*jawhar mujarrad*), whose actions are independent from those of the corporeal instruments [belonging to the body]" (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:261). In his account, al-Ījī states that the philosophers refer to the Prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) "The first thing God created was intellect" as proof of the existence of intellect.[11] Their main argument for the incorporeality of intellect is based on the premise that God, as one, can only directly originate one entity. This originated entity cannot be body because body is a composite of matter and form; nor is it either of these parts of body because they are dependent on each other; nor is it an accident because accident cannot exist independently of substance; nor is it soul since soul requires body to produce its effects. Therefore, the entity must be intellect.

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[11] In his commentary, al-Jurjānī adds that some of them combined this Prophetic tradition with two other traditions, "The first thing God created was the Pen (*qalam*)" and "The first thing God created was my light (*nurī*)," that is to say, the light of the Prophet. They held that the first effect (*maʿlūl*) of God's creation, insofar as it is incorporeal and conceives itself is called intellect, insofar as it has an intermediary position between the beginning of creation and the rest of created things is called Pen, and by virtue of its playing the role of intermediary in the emanation of the lights of prophecy is the light of the Prophet Muhammad (*sayyid al-anbiyāʾ*)" (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:261).

Al-Ījī lists a number of objections. He denies the premise that from one, only one can originate. Why, he asks, is not possible for the first originated entity to be body? Why can't God directly originate both of its parts, that is, matter and form? Even if the first originated being is not body, why it is impossible for it to be soul? Why is it not possible that the soul's administration of body be conditional on its attachment to body? Even if it the first originated is not body, why it is impossible for it to be a self-subsistent attribute of God? (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 262; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:261–62).

The philosophers' account of origination of the existents of world proceeds from this first originated entity of intellect. They claim, al-Ījī states, that the intellect has three reflections (*i'tibārāt*): of itself, of its dependence on another, and of being a possible existent. Each of these reflections gives rise to other existents: its reflection on itself originates intellect; its reflection on its dependence on another originates soul; and its reflection on being a possible existent originates body, that is, the First Celestial Sphere. In these three cases, the most noble reflection is linked to the most noble origination, namely the origination of a second intellect, while the most base is linked to the most base origination, that is, to the origination of body. Likewise, through its reflection, the Second Intellect originates a third intellect, a soul, and a celestial sphere and so on to the tenth intellect, which is known as the Active Intellect and is associated with the ninth celestial sphere, the lunar sphere. The Active Intellect emanates forms and accidents upon terrestrial elements and composite bodies that are formed through varying influences of the motions of the celestial spheres and the locations of planetary conjunctions.

Al-Ījī rejects this account, listing several objections. If these reflections of intellect were actual existents, then they would undoubtedly have originated from several sources, else the premise for this argument that from one, only one can originate cannot be true. But if these reflections are just reflections, then they cannot have any role in the origin of existing things. The assertion that the most noble origination is linked to the most noble manner of reflection is pure rhetoric! It has no role in serious deliberations of the search for knowledge! It is difficult to accept linking the origination of the Eighth Celestial Sphere with its numerous stars to a process similar to that for the other spheres. It is also difficult to accept the linking of the numerous forms and accidents in our world to Active Intellect. What the philosophers have relied on for their account is obviously very weak! (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 263). Al-Jurjānī's insertion of "in the view of the author" in his comment suggests an attempt to distance himself from al-Ījī's strident objections to the philosophers' arguments (al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:263).

The philosophers also claim that human souls are incorporeal and that they are not an emergent property of natural bodies (as plant and animal souls are), but rather they are attached to bodies as their governor and regulator (Ibn Sīnā, *Najāt*, 46–50; Ibn Sīnā, *Nafs*, 187–96). Al-Ījī remarks that this was also upheld by al-Ghazālī, al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, and some Sufis (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 258; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:253). The claim is supported by a number of arguments all based on the premise that the soul is the substrate for objects of knowledge. These arguments assert that as such a substrate, soul must be incorporeal. Thus, since the soul can conceive uncombined simples (that is, not composite objects like body, or it can conceive existence, which is a simple concept lacking further parts), it must, as a substrate for such simples, be indivisible and therefore cannot be corporeal, for the divisibility of the substrate entails the divisibility of the simple concepts that inhere in it.

Al-Ījī objects that this claim is based on the premise that soul is a substrate for objects of knowledge, but this is impossible because in the *kalām* view knowledge is purely a relationship (*taʿalluq mujarrad*) between knower and the object of knowledge (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 140). Knowledge is not something that inheres in the knower (this implies mental existence!), it is just a linguistic expression characterizing the state of the knower. But even if we were to grant that knowledge arises from the acquisition of the form of the object of knowledge, say a simple, the substrate for the form of the simple does not have to correspond to it in any way whatsoever, including also being simple. Even if this were granted, namely that the form of the simple is simple, not all corporeal objects are divisible. The philosophers' premise is based on denying the existence of the indivisible atom. Even if this were granted, namely that corporeal objects are divisible, why should what inheres in them also be divisible? For example, in the view of the philosophers, surface inheres in body, yet it is not divisible depthwise; line inheres in surface, yet is not divisible breadthwise; and point inheres in line, but is not divisible at all. Only if the inherent object inheres in the manner of being spread out can the claim be made that it is divided with the division of substrate, but we do not grant that this is the case here. But even if this were granted, that is, what inheres is divisible if the substrate were divisible, it is divisible potentially and not actually and therefore like body remains a whole (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 257; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:254–55).

Similarly, the philosophers argue that soul must be incorporeal because it conceives universals, and since they are incorporeal, so too must the substrate they inhere in, or the soul must be incorporeal because it can conceive opposites, and opposites cannot inhere in the same material substrate, so the soul, as substrate, must be incorporeal. These arguments are also dismissed by al-Ījī on the previous ground that the form of the object does not share the same characteristic of as the object itself, such as size, whiteness, blackness, and so on.

Al-Ījī also discusses the philosophers' views, which are actually Ibn Sīnā's views, on temporal origin of the human soul and its attachment to the human body. But he ends this account with the now familiar remark, "In our view, all of this is due to the direct activity of the Agent who acts out of choice" (al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 261; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ*, 7:260).

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CHAPTER 18

IBN ABĪ JUMHŪR AL-AḤSĀʾĪ (D. AFTER 1491) AND HIS *KITĀB MUJLĪ MIRʾĀT AL-MUNJĪ*

SABINE SCHMIDTKE

THE spiritual and intellectual life in the Eastern lands of Islam during the post-Avicennan period was dominated by the peripatetic philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), the philosophical mysticism of Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) and the teachings of *Shaykh al-ishrāq* Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī *al-maqtūl* (in 597/1191). Over time, these different intellectual perspectives increasingly interacted with traditional Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarite *kalām*, culminating within Twelver Shīʿism in the philosophy of representatives of the so-called School of Iṣfahān in the eleventh/seventeenth century and, during the Qājār period, in the different intellectual strands of the School of Tehran (Pourjavady, forthcoming). Ibn Sīnā's philosophy was primarily received through Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) influential commentary on the *Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Gacek, Pourjavady, and Wisnovsky, forthcoming). For the spread of Ibn al-ʿArabī's ideas in the Islamic East, the writings of his prominent disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1273–74) were of primary significance (Todd 2014), as well as the writings of the latter's students, namely ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291), Saʿīd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 695/1296), Muʾayyid al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. ca 700/1300), and Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 688/1289). Within Imāmī circles, the interpretations and adaptations of Ibn al-ʿArabī's notions through the writings of Jamāl al-Dīn (Kamāl al-Dīn) ʿAlī b. Sulaymān al-Baḥrānī al-Sitrāwī (fl. first half seventh/thirteenth century) (Madelung 1989; Taghavi 2013) and Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ḥaydar b. ʿAlī al-Āmulī (d. after 787/1385) proved authoritative (Agha-Tehrani 1996). Besides these two strands, Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination soon developed into one of the dominant schools of Islamic philosophy and had a long-lasting impact on Imāmī theology and philosophy from the seventh/thirteenth century onward. Most of the later Twelver Shīʿite thinkers saw Illuminationist teachings through the eyes (1) of the Jewish philosopher ʿIzz al-Dawla Ibn Kammūna (d. in or after 683/1284), who was widely known as *shāriḥ al-Talwīḥāt*, on grounds of his commentary on Suhrawardī's *Kitāb al-Talwīḥāt* (completed in 667/1268), the first of its kind (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2006b), (2) of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Shahrazūrī, a younger contemporary of Ibn Kammūna as it seems, who was still alive in 687/1288 and is mostly known for his encyclopedic *al-Shajara al-ilāhiyya fī ʿulūm al-ḥaqāʾiq al-rabbāniyya* (completed in 680/1281) (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2006a),[1] and (3) of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311) whose commentary (*sharḥ*) on Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* was widely received. When composing his *Sharḥ*, Quṭb al-Dīn extensively used both Ibn Kammūna's *Sharḥ al-Talwīḥāt* as well as Shahrazūrī's earlier commentary on *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, which was far less influential than Quṭb al-Dīn's *Sharḥ* (Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2004, 2006a, 2007, 2009). Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsāʾī (b. ca. 838/1434–35, d. after 906/1501) was the first Imāmī scholar to amalgamate in his magnum opus Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarite *kalām*, Peripatetic and Illuminationist philosophy, and philosophical mysticism, as is already indicated by the title of the work, *Kitāb Mujlī mirʾāt al-munjī fī l-kalām wa-l-ḥikmatayn wa-l-taṣawwuf* (Madelung 1978; Schmidtke 2000).

Little is known about Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan Ibn Abī Jumhūr's life, and his scholarly biography can only rudimentarily be reconstructed on the basis of self-testimonies contained in his writings, his colophons, and his *ijāza*s (Bū Khamsīn 1993; Schmidtke 2000, 2009; Ghufrānī 2013). The outlines of his formation can be gleaned from an *ijāza* Ibn Abī Jumhūr issued on 10 Jumādā I 896/1491 in Mashhad to his patron and host Sayyid Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Gharawī al-Qummī (d. 931/1524–25). In addition to a comprehensive autobibliography providing an inventory of his writings up to 896/1491, the *ijāza* contains seven chains of transmission, each one of which starts with one of Ibn Abī Jumhūr's teachers (Schmidtke 2000, appendix 3; editio princeps in Schmidtke 2009). Born around 838/1434–35 in the village of al-Taymiyya in al-Ḥasāʾ on the Eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, Ibn Abī Jumhūr began his education in his homeland, as is suggested by the names of scholars originating from this region that are mentioned in the first four chains of transmission as his immediate teachers (see also generally Pakatchi 2013), namely (1) his father, Zayn al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Ḥusām al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan b. Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsāʾī (d. before 895/1489–90), whom he identifies as his "first teacher" (*shaykhī wa-ustādhī al-awwal*) and who in turn had studied with Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn Nizār al-Aḥsāʾī, *qāḍī l-quḍāt* in Baḥrayn under the Banū Jarwān, (2) Ḥirz al-Dīn al-Baḥrānī al-Awālī (al-Awāʾilī/al-Awābilī), who had studied with Fakhr al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Makhdam al-Awālī (al-Awāʾilī/al-Awābilī) al-Baḥrānī, (3) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Kamāl al-Dīn Mūsā al-Mūsawī al-Ḥusaynī al-Aḥsāʾī, and (4) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad al-Mūsawī al-Ḥusaynī (who was in turn a student of various scholars from al-Qaṭīf). In 877/1472–73, when circa thirty-eight years of age, Ibn Abī Jumhūr set out for a pilgrimage to Mecca and continued from there to the shrines of the imams in Iraq. It may have been during this trip that he spent a considerable length of time in Najaf, where he studied with (5) Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Fattāl al-Najafī (fl. 870/1465–66), who was in turn a student of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502) (Pourjavady 2011, 8). With Ḥasan al-Fattāl, Ibn Abī Jumhūr presumably studied the Illuminationist philosophy of the *Shaykh al-ishrāq*. Ibn Abī Jumhūr is also known to have paid during his early career a brief visit (of about a month) to Jabal ʿĀmil, where he possibly studied with the (6) Shaykh ʿAlī b. Hilāl al-Jazāʾirī, and he visited at some stage Kāshān where he studied with (7) Wajīh al-Dīn b. ʿAlā al-Dīn Fatḥ Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Shams al-Dīn Isḥāq b. Fatḥān al-Wāʾiz al-Qummī al-Kāshānī (fl. 877/1473). Over the following decades Ibn Abī Jumhūr sojourned repeatedly in Mashhad, a city that had apparently become as a second home to him during those years. Here he was closely attached to his patron and host Sayyid Muḥsin b. Muḥammad al-Riḍawī. At the latter's request Ibn Abī Jumhūr commented upon his own *Zād al-musāfirīn*, an early treatise of his on *kalām*, completing the autocommentary, *Kashf al-barāhīn li-sharḥ Zād al-musāfirīn*, on 17 Dhū l-Ḥijja 878 / 5 May 1474 in the house of his patron (Ghufrānī 2013, 138 ff., no. 52). Earlier during the same year Ibn Abī Jumhūr held a series of debates with a Sunnī scholar from Herat, the venue for the first and third sessions again being his patron's house (Ghufrānī 2013, 236–54, no. 67). The duration of Ibn Abī Jumhūr's first visit to Mashhad as well as his whereabouts over the next decade are unknown,[2] but there is evidence that in 886/1481–82 he was in Baḥrayn: in Ṣafar 886/1481 we find him in al-Ḥasāʾ, and in Dhū l-Qaʿda 886/1482 he is attested to have been in al-Qaṭīf. Between 888/1483 and 889/1484, Ibn Abī Jumhūr paid a second visit to Mashhad. Here he dictated, in four sessions, his *al-Bawāriq al-muḥsiniyya li-tajallī al-Durra al-jumhūriyya*, an autocommentary on his *Durra al-jumhūriyya* in which the author discusses some questions of Illuminationist philosophy (completed in Muḥarram 888/1483),[3] and it is here that he completed in Dhū l-Qaʿda 888/1483 a work on legal theory, *Kāshifat al-ḥāl ʿan aḥwāl al-istidlāl* (Ghufrānī 2013, 126 ff., no. 51). The only extant copy of the *Bawāriq* ends with a collation note (dated 890 AH) according to which the anonymous scribe had collated the text together with the author—Mashhad may again have been the likely venue (Schmidtke 2009, 56). The *Bawāriq* is also the earliest extant testimony for Ibn Abī Jumhūr's engagement with Illuminationist philosophy. In Muḥarram 889/1484 Ibn Abī Jumhūr concluded another brief credal tract in Mashhad, *Risāla tashtamil ʿalā aqall mā yajib ʿalā l-mukallafīn min al-ʿilm bi-uṣūl al-dīn* or *al-Risāla al-mashhadiyya fī l-uṣūl al-dīniyya wa-l-iʿtiqādāt al-ḥaqqiyya bi-l-dalāʾil al-yaqīniyya* (Ghufrānī 2013, 49 f., no. 22), this being the latest dated evidence for his second sojourn in the city. Over the next five to six years Ibn Abū Jumhūr apparently traveled extensively. In 893/1488 we find him back in his hometown, al-Taymiyya, where he completed his autocommentary on his brief credal tract *Maslak al-afhām fī ʿilm al-kalām*, entitled *al-Nūr al-munjī min al-ẓalām*. Shortly before or perhaps during the year 894/1488–89 he undertook another pilgrimage to Mecca and continued his journey from there to Iraq. It was during this trip that he began composing his supercommentary *Mujlī mirʾāt al-munjī*, as he explains in the introduction to the work (*Mujlī*, 3 ff. [1, 133 ff.][4]) In Rabīʿ I 895/1490 he completed his *al-Masālik al-jāmiʿiyya sharḥ al-Risāla al-Alfiyy*a, a commentary on the *Risāla al-Alfiyya* of al-Shahīd al-awwal (d. 786/1384) on ritual prayer, in Najaf. From here, he seems to have proceeded immediately to Mashhad, this now being his third visit to that city. For the following two years (895/1490–897/1492) we possess ample evidence for Ibn Abī Jumhūr's presence in this city. By the end of Jumādā II 895/1490 he completed a rough copy of his *Mujlī mirʾāt al-munjī*, followed by the completion of the fair copy on 16 Ṣafar 896/1490. In the following spring, on 24 Rabīʿ II 896/1491, he issued an *ijāza* for this work to Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Gharawī (Ghufrānī 2013, 21, no. 6), followed by another comprehensive *ijāza* issued again to his patron and host on 10 Jumādā I 896/1491 that includes his autobibliography (Ghufrānī 2013, 19 ff., no. 5; Schmidtke 2009, 62 ff.). Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ had also studied two other works of Ibn Abī Jumhūr with the author, namely *al-Masālik al-jāmiʿiyya* (*ijāza* dated 4 Jumādā I 896/1491; cf. Ghufrānī 2013, 17 ff., no. 4) and *Kāshifat al-ḥāl* (for which he was granted two *ijāza*s, on 15 Jumādā I 896/1491 and on 20 Jumādā I 896; cf. Ghufrānī 2013, 22 ff., nos. 7 and 8). Ibn Abī Jumhūr evidently stayed in Mashhad until the early autumn of 897/1492. In Ṣafar or Ramaḍān 897 / December 1491 or July 1492 he completed his *ḥadīth* compilation *Ghawālī al-laʾālī al-ʿazīziyya*, and in Dhū l-Qaʿda 897/1492 he issued another *ijāza* to his host for this work (Ghufrānī 2013, 23 f., no. 9). Toward the end of 897/1492 or the beginning of 898/1493 Ibn Abī Jumhūr apparently left Mashhad for Astarābād. This is suggested by yet another *ijāza* he granted to his patron (with whom he was traveling) on 15 Jumādā I 898/1493 in Q-l-qān (or Q-l-fān) in the region of Astarābād (Ghufrānī 2013, 28 f., no. 12). Sometime later, in Dhū l-Ḥijja 898/1493, he issued an *ijāza* to a certain Jalāl al-Dīn Bahrām b. Bahrām b. ʿAlī al-Astarābādī for his *Ghawālī al-laʾālī* (Ghufrānī 2013, 29 ff., no. 13), and in Ramaḍān 899/1494, he gave an *ijāza* to ʿAṭāʾ Allāh b. Muʿīn al-Dīn b. Naṣr Allāh al-Sarawī al-Astarābādī for his *al-Masālik al-jāmiʿiyya*, both in the region of Astarābād (Ghufrānī 2013, 30 ff., no. 14). About two years later, in Shaʿbān 901/1496, Ibn Abī Jumhūr completed in Astarābād a fair copy of his *Durar al-laʾālī al-ʿimādiyya*, which is dedicated to a certain local vizier, ʿImād al-Dīn. It was perhaps also during his sojourn in Astarābād that Ibn Abī Jumhūr issued an *ijāza* to another student of his, Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Sayyid ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn b. al-Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn al-Hāshimī al-Ṭālaqānī al-Kāshī for his *Ghawālī*, with no indication as to the place and date of issue.[5] The two latest dated pieces of evidence for his life indicate that Ibn Abī Jumhūr continued traveling in the Arabian peninsula and Iraq. On 25 Dhū l-Qaʿda 904/

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[1] Shahrazūrī's *Shajara* has been edited twice in recent years: (1) ed. Muḥammad Najīb Kūrkūn (Çemberlitaş, İstanbul: Elif Yayınları, 2004); 2nd ed. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir; Istanbul: Maktabat al-Isrshād, 2007); (2) ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī (Tehran: Muʾassasa-yi pizhūhishī-yi ḥikmat va falsafa, 1383/2004–5). In this chapter, reference is given to Ḥabībī's edition only.

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[2] He had issued an *ijāza* to al-Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Ḥusām al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Yūsuf b. Abī Shabāna, dated 3 Rabīʿ II 880 / 6 August 1475 at an unknown location; see Ghufrānī 2013, 15 ff. no. 2.

[3] The colophon contains no indication as to where the work was completed. For an argument in favor of Mashhad, see Schmidtke 2009, 55. Cf., however, Ghufrānī 2013, 57, who maintains that the *Bawāriq* was completed in Awāl in Baḥrayn.

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[4] Reference will be given in this chapter to the edition of 1329/1911 (ed. Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī; republ. Tehran 2008) as well as, in square brackets, the recent critical edition by Riḍā Yaḥyā Pūr Fārmad (5 vols., Beirut, 2012).

[5] Cf. Ghufrānī 2013, 24ff. no. 10, where 912/1506–7 is suggested as a possible date for this *ijāza*.

1499 he finished another commentary on the *Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar* of the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī in Medina (Schmidtke 2006, 2013; Ibn Abī Jumhūr (*Sharḥ*); on this work see also below), and on 9 Rajab 906/1501—Ibn Abī Jumhūr was by then circa sixty-eight years of age—he issued an *ijāza* in al-Ḥilla to ʿAlī b. al-Qāsim al-ʿAdhāqa for the *Qawāʿid al-aḥkām* of the ʿAllāma (Ghufrānī 2013, 32 ff., no. 15). Nothing is known about his life after this date.

Ibn Abī Jumhūr's *Kitāb Mujlī mirʾāt al-munjī* was thus written at a later stage of the author's life. Completed in Jumādā II 895/1490 (rough copy) in Mashhad, when the author had reached an approximate age of fifty-seven years, the *Mujlī* was an autocommentary on the *Kitāb al-Nūr al-munjī min al-ẓalām* (finished two years earlier, in 893/1488, in al-Taymiyya in al-Ḥasāʾ), which in turn was a commentary on the author's very concise *Kitāb Maslak* (or *Masālik*) *al-afhām fí ʿilm al-kalām* (date and place of composition unknown). Judging by the number of extant (recorded) manuscript copies—seventy according to Ghufrānī (2013, 181–206)—the *Mujlī* was Ibn Abī Jumhūr's by far most popular work.[6] Among later thinkers, it was in particular Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī (d. 1241/1826) who quotes the *Mujlī* extensively in his own writings.

As the title of the basic work indicates, it was essentially a work on theology. This is also reflected by its overall structure that has already been provided by the basic work, *Maslak al-afhām*: following an introduction (*muqaddima*) containing discussions of the prolegomena, the bulk of the work is divided into two parts, one on divine unicity (*al-qism al-awwal fī l-tawḥīd*)—with discussions about the notion of *tawḥīd*, the proofs for the existence of God, and about His attributes—and a second part on actions (*al-qism al-thānī fī l-afʿāl wa-hiya l-ʿawāriḍ al-lāzima ʿinda iʿtibār fayḍ al-mawjūdāt ʿan al-dhāt al-muqaddasa*) corresponding to the chapters on divine justice in Muʿtazilite works. Here, the author treats moral obligation (*taklīf*), man's capacity, will and actions, divine acts of grace (*alṭāf*, sing. *luṭf*), prophecy, imamate, annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and resurrection (*iʿāda*), repentance (*tawba*), and belief (*īmān*). The work ends with a lengthy concluding section (*khātima*) in the course of which Ibn Abī Jumhūr discusses in detail various mystical notions and adds, toward the end, four "admonitions" (*waṣāyā*, sg. *waṣiyya*) for his readers.

In his *al-Nūr al-munjī*, Ibn Abī Jumhūr comments on the text of the *Maslak* in a comprehensive manner, often expanding on the mystical and philosophical (mostly Illuminationist) dimensions of the issues under consideration (these are still absent in the *Maslak*). By contrast, on the level of the *Mujlī*, Ibn Abī Jumhūr in most instances restricts himself to elaborating on specific notions or arguments mentioned in the two other works, and this as a rule in great detail. The author usually considers only those issues worthy to be elaborated upon that originate within either the Illuminationist or the mystical tradition.[7] On the rare occasions where the basic work and the commentary deal with strictly theological issues with no corresponding concept in philosophy or mysticism, the supercommentary as a rule remains silent. Originating from within the Imāmī Muʿtazilī tradition, Ibn Abī Jumhūr refers at all three textual levels to the followers of Muʿtazilite doctrines as the *ʿadliyya* without ever explicitly associating himself with this group—such reservation toward the Muʿtazila being a characteristic trait for most Imāmī theologians (Madelung 1979). It is noteworthy that the author refers the reader in the *Nur al-munjī* and the *Mujlī* repeatedly to "our works on theology" (*kutubunā al-kalāmiyya*), implying that the commentary and the supercommentary are not to be counted among his strictly theological works.

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[6] While *Maslak al-afhām* is independently preserved in one manuscript in the Marwī collection (Schmidtke 2009, 54), the *Nūr al-munjī* is exclusively transmitted as part of the *Mujlī*. Riḍā Yaḥyā Pūr Fārmad published separately *al-Nūr al-munjī min al-ẓalām ḥāshiyat Maslak al-afhām* (2 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍāʾ li-l-tibāʿa wa-l-nashr wa-l-tawzīʿ, 2013), which contains no material that would go beyond what is contained in his edition of the *Mujlī* (see n. 4). This edition will not be referred to in the present chapter.

Throughout his supercommentary, Ibn Abī Jumhūr freely combined traditional Muʿtazilite theology with notions of Peripatetic and Illuminationist philosophy, and of philosophical mysticism, thus creating an apparently unprecedented synthesis of these strands. On this basis he furthermore sought to mediate between the doctrines of the Muʿtazilites and the Ashʿarites. While in his earlier theological writings there are no traces of either mystical or Illuminationist thought, the author's concern to reconcile opposing Ashʿarite and Muʿtazilite views is already clearly prevalent in them. To judge from the evidence of his earlier *kalām* works, notably the *Kashf al-barāhīn*, a commentary on the author's *Zād al-musāfirīn* (completed in 878/1474), as well as the more extensive *Maʿīn al-maʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn*,[8] to which he frequently refers in his *Kashf al-barāhīn* and which was apparently completed before 878/1474, the author was at the time not yet engaged with Illuminationist philosophy or philosophical mysticism. In the majority of issues that would not provoke a contradiction with inherently Twelver Shīʿī doctrines he maintained traditional Muʿtazilite views, usually adopting the positions of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044) and his school, as was characteristic for Imāmī theologians since the sixth/twelfth century (Ansari and Schmidtke 2014), freely mixing them with peripatetic terminology and concepts whenever they did not go against any theological doctrines. On that basis, he sought to harmonize Ashʿarite and Muʿtazilite positions—a tendency he further developed in the *Kitāb al-Mujlī*. It is therefore likely that Ibn Abī Jumhūr got acquainted with the thought of Suhrawardī only after 878/1474, possibly through his teacher Ḥasan al-Fattāl, with whom he studied in Najaf. Moreover, from the evidence in the *Mujlī* it seems evident that the *Shajara* of Shahrazūrī was Ibn Abī Jumhūr's principal source for Illuminationist philosophy. It is uncertain, by contrast, when and through whom he was introduced to philosophical mysticism, but this strand of thought was doubtlessly a living tradition in his homeland Baḥrayn, as is visible in the writings of Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Sulaymān al-Baḥrānī and the *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha* of the latter's student Kamāl al-Dīn Maytham b. ʿAlī b. Maytham al-Baḥrānī (d. after 681/1282)—Ibn Abī Jumhūr incorporated numerous lengthy quotations from the *Sharḥ* into the *Mujlī*. In addition to this, Ibn Abī Jumhūr was evidently familiar with at least some of the writings of Ḥaydar al-Āmulī.

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[7] For the structure of the work, including its numerous lengthy digressions, see Ghufrānī 2013, 147–81, no. 53; Ibn Abī Jumhūr, *Mujlī* (ed. R. Y. Farmād), 5:1817–77. Both overviews are largely based on the marginal lemmata added by the editor of the lithograph edition of 1911, Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī; see also the 2008 Tehran reprint of the 1911 edition, *alif-ḥāḥā*.

[8] *Maʿīn al-maʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* (also known as *Sharḥ Maʿīn al-fikar fī sharḥ al-Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar*) was a supercommentary on the author's *Maʿīn al-fikar fī sharḥ al-Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar*, which in turn was—as the title indicates—a commentary on the *Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar* of the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī. See Ghufrānī 2013, 233 ff., no. 64.

Throughout the *Mujlī* and the underlying commentary the influence of Shahrazūrī's *Shajara* is evident. In his *al-Nūr al-munjī* Ibn Abī Jumhūr follows in many instances Shahrazūrī's line of argumentation as is found in his *Shajara*. Most striking is the influence of the *Shajara* on Ibn Abī Jumhūr's supercommentary, the *Mujlī*. Throughout his supercommentary, Ibn Abī Jumhūr quotes numerous lengthy passages and at times entire chapters of the *Shajara*. Given the textual agreement between the *Mujlī* and the *Shajara* in all instances, Ibn Abī Jumhūr must have had a copy of the work at his disposal rather than having gleaned the material from an intermediary source (Schmidtke 2000, appendix 2).

Throughout his work, Ibn Abī Jumhūr refrains from identifying the source of his lengthy quotations from the *Shajara*. Neither the name of the author nor the title of the work is explicitly referred to anywhere in his *Mujlī*. In most cases Ibn Abī Jumhūr does not even alert his readers when adducing passages that he had gleaned from the *Shajara*, thus creating the impression that the subsequent elaborations are his own. In a number of instances he remarks that what follows or what has been said is the view of others, thus indicating that he is opening a quotation. Occasionally he introduces a quotation from the *Shajara* by stating that this is the view of "one of the later representatives from among the Illuminationists" (*baʿḍ ahl al-ishrāq min al-mutaʾakhkhirīn*), "a later [scholar]" (*baʿḍ al-mutaʾakhkhirīn*), "one of the later Muslim philosophers" (*baʿḍ al-mutaʾakhkhirīn min al-ḥukamāʾ al-islāmiyyīn*), or "one from among the people of wisdom" (*baʿḍ ahl al-ḥikma*) (Schmidtke 2000, appendix 2). Given the popularity of Shahrazūrī's *Shajara* at the time of Ibn Abī Jumhūr's writing, such remarks may well have been clear indications as to whom they refer to.

Taking into consideration his entire oeuvre in the field of *kalām*, Ibn Abī Jumhūr developed over his lifetime from a conventional theologian whose doctrinal views were predominantly characterized by Muʿtazilite notions, as was typical for Imāmī theologians up to his time, into a thinker who predominantly maintained philosophical and mystical notions. This having been said, the concern to mediate between opposing views of different strands of thought, be it within the field of *kalām* or beyond, is a trait that characterizes his entire oeuvre in this field. In the following, the significance of the various intellectual strands for his thought as they present themselves in his magnum opus, the *Kitāb al-Mujlī*, will be outlined.[9]

Philosophical notions characterize Ibn Abī Jumhūr's views in his *Mujlī* in a number of central issues. This is the case, for example, with the questions that occur in his discussion about the divine attribute of power (*Mujlī*, 131 ff. [2, 537 ff.]), namely (1) whether God is a necessary cause (*mūjib*) or a freely choosing agent (*mukhtār*), (2) whether God has created the world ex nihilo or whether creation is coeternal with God, its first cause, and (3) whether God can create an endless multiplicity without intermediary or whether from God, who is one in every respect, only one immediate effect can result while creation in its entirety occurs as an hierarchic emanation. In all three issues, Ibn Abī Jumhūr opts for the philosophical view rather than that of the theologians. Moreover, he argues that the views of the philosophers and the theologians are essentially identical. This claim, however, rests upon Ibn Abī Jumhūr's interpretative modification of the respective theological position.

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[9] For a detailed study of Ibn Abī Jumhūr's thought in his *Mujlī* and in his earlier works, see Schmidtke 2000.

God acts, Ibn Abī Jumhūr maintains in his *Mujlī*, on grounds of His knowledge of Himself and of the best possible order of being. With this Ibn Abī Jumhūr is in complete agreement with the philosophers. For Muʿtazilite theologians, this was unacceptable: they reproached the philosophers for conceptualizing God as a necessary cause (*mūjib*) whose acting is a necessary consequence of His essence rather than created by a free choosing agent (*mukhtār*) whose acts are preceded by knowledge and intention and therefore follow Him in time. Ibn Abī Jumhūr defends the philosophical definition of divine omnipotence in his *Nūr* and his *Mujlī* against the opposing view of the (Muʿtazilite) theologians. He refers to the philosophical distinction between *metaphysical* necessitating as it applies to God's acting and *natural* necessitating as it applies to natural causes. By contrast with the case of God, the latter do not necessitate anything on grounds of knowledge and they are unconscious of their effects. Having accepted the philosophical understanding that God is the first cause of all being from which creation necessarily emanates, Ibn Abī Jumhūr further opts for the philosophical view that creation, or at least parts of it, are coeternal with the first cause from which they emanate. By consequence, he denies the theological doctrine of a *creatio ex nihilo* (*ḥudūth al-ʿālam*). Again, he defends the philosophical position against the *mutakallimūn* according to whom the philosophers contradict the Qurʾānic message: Ibn Abī Jumhūr maintains that the philosophical notion of "temporal eternity" (*qidam zamānī*) of creation is in full agreement with the Qurʾānic notion of the createdness of the world. He argues philosophically that parts of the creation may well exist simultaneously with God. Essentially (*bi-l-dhāt*), however, creation in its entirety is created (*muḥdath*), since only God, the necessary existent due to His essence (*wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātihi*), is "essentially eternal" (*qadīm dhātī*). It is the philosophical notion of essential createdness (*ḥudūth dhātī*), therefore, that distinguishes in his view created beings from the Divine rather than createdness in time (*ḥudūth zamānī*). When addressing the scope of God's power, Ibn Abī Jumhūr likewise opts for the philosopher's position that the absolute unity of the cause necessitates the unity of the effect. Although he defends himself in his *Mujlī* against the reproach of supporting the philosophical notion that from God, who is one in every respect, only one effect can occur immediately (*al-wāḥid lā yaṣdur ʿanhu illā l-wāḥid*), there are numerous indications that he agreed in fact with the philosophers' view and that he considered the theologians' view, according to which this violates the doctrine of divine omnipotence that extends by definition to all contingents that are subject to power, to be invalid. This also suggests that Ibn Abī Jumhūr considers creation to be hierarchic emanation in the Neoplatonic sense.

A further indication that Ibn Abī Jumhūr endorses in his *Nūr* and his *Mujlī* the philosophical understanding of the Divine is that he equates the divine attribute of will with the philosophical notion of divine providence (*ʿināya*), while he negates the theological definition of the Muʿtazilites that God's being willing means that He knows about the benefits of an action (*Mujlī*, 219:20–24 [3, 825:15–826:5]). By defining God's will as His unchanging knowledge about the most perfect order of things and acknowledging that this order must as a result necessarily emanate from God, Ibn Abī Jumhūr had renounced the Muʿtazilite understanding of divine will: neither is God's will temporal nor His knowledge of the most perfect order subject to change or dependent on external events. Rather, God knows eternally and unchangingly.

The philosophical notion of divine providence also determines Ibn Abī Jumhūr's concept of the "why" of God's acting (Schmidtke 2000, 127 ff.). In his *Mujlī*, he negates the Muʿtazilite doctrine according to which God acts on the basis of specific, concrete motives (*ghāya muʿayyana*) and in view of something that is situated outside His own essence (*Mujlī* 222:7–12 [3, 832:17–833:4]). The essential primary intention (*al-qaṣd al-awwalī/al-qaṣd al-dhātī/al-maqṣūd al-dhātī*) that is at the basis of God's acting, according to Ibn Abī Jumhūr, is rather His knowledge of Himself and of the perfect order, or, being in its most perfect form (*al-wujūd ʿalā l-wajh al-akmal*). The concrete, specific advantages and benefits created beings experience as a result of God's acting are nothing but necessary consequences of what is essentially intended (*al-tābiʿ wa-l-lāzim li-mā huwa l-mawjūd bi-l-dhāt*). Their basis is therefore not an essential primary purpose by an accidental one (*al-qaṣd al-ʿaraḍī*) (*Mujlī*, 222:15–24 [3, 833:9–834:2]).

In all these issues in which Ibn Abī Jumhūr adopts the philosophical points of view, his elaborations in the *Mujlī* rely on Shahrazūrī's *Shajara*. Moreover, Ibn Abī Jumhūr follows Shahrazūrī also with respect to those questions in which the Illuminationists disagree with the positions of the Peripatetics. Ibn Abī Jumhūr adopts, for example, the Illuminationist notion of illuminative knowledge by presence (*ʿilm ḥuḍūrī ishrāqī*) and shared his criticism of the Avicennan notion of knowledge by quoting in extenso the relevant sections of the *Shajara* (*Mujlī*, 136:14–140:26 [2, 552:6–565:4]; cf. *Shajara* 3/472 ff.). Drawing on the notion of knowledge by presence, Ibn Abī Jumhūr also does not concede that God's knowledge of particulars implies change in Him, as has been maintained by the philosophers when arguing against the theologians' notion of divine omniscience that includes all details and changes that occur in the course of time.

Ibn Abī Jumhūr also follows Shahrazūrī when adopting the latter's doctrines of transmigration (*tanāsukh*) of incomplete souls (*al-nāqiṣūn*) following their deaths into bodies of animals for the purpose of purification. However, by contrast to Shahrazūrī, Ibn Abī Jumhūr maintains at the same time the theological doctrine of bodily resurrection (*al-maʿād al-jismānī*). Shahrazūrī distinguished three positions regarding the fate of souls in the hereafter: (1) the view of the Peripatetics, who maintain that at death all souls will be separated from the corporeal; (2) the view of the "Reincarnationists" (*tanāsukhiyya*), who teach that the cycle of transmigration is eternal, as all souls are corporeal and therefore subject to an infinite process of reincarnation to human and subhuman bodies; (3) those who believe that at death the perfect souls and the intermediate in perfection are disembodied, whereas the deficient souls undergo a process of transmigration for the purpose of purification. Shahrazūrī refuted the Peripatetic view of the disembodiment of all souls at death and also rejects categorically the position of the "Reincarnationists." He stated that he was unable to trace the names of adherents of this position and assumed that they have died out by his time.

The proponents of the third position, who maintain that at death only the perfect and the intermediate in perfection are disembodied, while the imperfect transmigrate from one physical body to another, are in his view "the most excellent among the philosophers and people of religion" (*afāḍil al-ḥukamāʾ wa-l-milliyyīn*). He pointed out that the proponents of metempsychosis differ in their beliefs on the modes and directions of the transmigration of the imperfect human souls and subsequently reviewed what he considered to be the two principal concepts of metempsychosis. One concept was maintained by the Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*), as well as by some other, anonymous groups. They held that the souls are initially attached only to the lowest species of bodies, namely atoms, minerals, or plants. From there, they gradually ascend into higher bodies until they reach human bodies. Those souls that attain perfection in human bodies escape the corporeal world at death and rise into the lower spheres of Paradise. The imperfect souls, by contrast, transmigrate once more into bodies of lower, subhuman species suitable to their evil traits, for the purpose of purification. From there they reascend gradually into higher bodies until they again reach human bodies. Once purified, they also escape from the corporeal world.

Shahrazūrī stated that a different, second belief of metempsychosis was maintained by the ancient sages of Greece (Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle), Persia, China, India (Būdhāsaf), and Egypt (Agathodaemon, Hermes), as well as by "others from among the most excellent philosophers of the nations" (*wa-ghayruhum min afāḍil ḥukamāʾ al-umam*). In contrast to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, the proponents of this notion maintained that only human bodies are prepared to receive souls through direct emanation from the separate intellect. Subhuman bodies, by contrast, receive souls only through transmigration of human souls. Souls that have attained purification in animal bodies immediately escape the corporeal world at the death of their animal bodies. According to Shahrazūrī, some representatives of this second concept of transmigration of souls, among them "the Buddha" (Būdhāsaf), believed that a human rational soul can transmigrate into animal bodies only, whereas others allowed its transmigration into any subhuman species—animals, plants, or minerals.

Shahrazūrī revealed his own view in his evaluation of the two concepts. With respect to the first group, he repudiated the possibility of metempsychosis of human rational souls in subhuman species other than animals as well as their belief that all species of bodies, that is, atoms, minerals, plants, and animal and human bodies, receive souls through direct emanation. He showed more sympathy for the second notion and particularly supported the doctrine which he ascribed to Būdhāsaf, according to which only human bodies are prepared to receive souls through direct emanation from the separate intellect, whereas animal bodies only receive transmigrated human souls, either directly or indirectly. Shahrazūrī explicitly repudiated the possibility of the transmigration of souls into the bodies of plants and minerals. Whereas at death the perfect in happiness immediately escape to the World of Light, and the intermediate in happiness ascend to the World of Suspended Images, the perfect in misery transmigrate to animal bodies for the purpose of purification from evil traits. The duration of this process of metempsychosis differs according to the quantity of the evil traits of a respective soul. Once purified, the soul ascends into the lower spheres of the World of Suspended Images. Souls that are unsuccessful in attaining purification do not remain eternally attached to animal bodies, but are eventually also separated from the bodies and ascend into the World of Images, where they become, in accordance with their evil traits, attached to shadows of suspended forms.

Shahrazūrī's final evaluation of the arguments of the various groups for their respective notions leaves no doubt that he himself supported this doctrine. He concluded that, in general, the claim of the veracity of transmigration is correct (*ṣaḥīḥ*). Evaluating the respective proofs in detail, however, he expressed doubts about whether they are decisive. He stated that, whereas the proofs for the invalidation (*ibṭāl*) of metempsychosis are not decisive, the proofs for the veracity of metempsychosis and reincarnation are also not decisive (*burhāniyya*) and only rhetorically convincing (*iqnāʿiyya*). However, since intuition (*ḥads*), inspiration (*ilhām*), and spiritual exercise (*riyāḍa*) also indicate the veracity of this doctrine, the proofs become decisive. To support the doctrine, he moreover pointed out that "there is no nation and no people with whom the [doctrine of] metempsychosis has not got a strong hold, even if they differ regarding its modalities, details, and directions, since this does not concern the affirmation of metempsychosis" and quotes those Qurʾānic verses and prophetic traditions that indicate the veracity of metempsychosis and the necessity of its occurrence. All this, Shahrazūrī concluded, are signs (*ishārāt*) and hints (*rumūz*) that indicate its veracity.

In his elaborations on the fate of the soul after death, Ibn Abī Jumhūr quotes extensively from Shahrazūrī's *Shajara*, again without identifying his source. The way he selects and arranges passages from the *Shajara* indicates the extent to which he follows Shahrazūrī's supportive attitude toward metempsychosis and where he deviates from his views. Ibn Abī Jumhūr follows Shahrazūrī's belief that imperfect human souls are transferred at death into animal bodies, corresponding to their moral traits. According to their progress in purification they ascend into bodies of more noble animals until they are sufficiently purified to escape to the lower ranks of paradise. Souls that remain unsuccessful in attaining purification are eventually also transferred to animal bodies within the World of Images. Ibn Abī Jumhūr only disagrees with Shahrazūrī insofar as he also adheres to the Islamic belief that God will restore the flesh and bones of the dead for the Judgment following His annihilation of the physical structure and order of the world. In order to harmonize this belief with the notion of metempsychosis, he adopts some elements of one of the anonymous views related by Shahrazūrī in his *Shajara* in his account of the first concept of metempsychosis, whose adherents combined their notion of metempsychosis with their belief in the resurrection of the material world. As it has been stated for the proponents of this doctrine, Ibn Abī Jumhūr distinguishes between the minor resurrection (*al-qiyāma al-ṣughrā*), which consists in the disembodiment of the particular soul, and the major resurrection (*al-qiyāma al-kubrā*), that is, the eventual restoration of the material world that follows its prior annihilation.

Ibn Abī Jumhūr also adopts in his *Mujlī* key notions that he had gleaned from philosophical mysticism. The doctrine of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) as it had been developed within the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī proved essential for his understanding of divine unicity (*tawḥīd*) (Schmidtke 2000, 49–55). Ibn Abī Jumhūr distinguishes in his *Nūr* three levels of *tawḥīd*: existential unity (*tawḥīd wujūdī*) at the top level, followed by unity of the divine attributes (*tawḥīd ṣifātī*) at the next lower (*adnā*) level. The lowest rank corresponds to the orthodox Islamic definition of *tawḥīd* (*tawḥīd islāmī*), that is, the denial of polytheism (*shirk ẓāhir*) as expressed in Qurʾān 47:19 ("Know thou therefore that there is no god but God"). In his supercommentary (*Mujlī* 109 ff. [2, 478 ff.]), Ibn Abī Jumhūr identifies the highest level of *tawḥīd*, existential unity, with Ibn al-ʿArabī's notion of the absolute, unlimited, and exclusive reality of the divine essence (*al-aḥadiyya al-ilāhiyya*) that is devoid of any multiplicity (Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 1:90). In the terminology of Ḥaydar Āmulī, this level is called *tawḥīd wujūdī, tawḥīd wujūdī bāṭinī, tawḥīd ḥaqīqī* as well as *tawḥīd al-awliyāʾ* (*Asrār*, 70, 77–81; *Naṣṣ*, 351, 352, 355, 381 and *passim*). The next lower level corresponds to inclusive unity (*waḥdāniyya/wāḥidiyya*) in Ibn al-ʿArabī's system that comprises the divine names and attributes, each one pointing to another aspect of the Divine. The plurality of God's names and attributes is also the cause for the multiplicity (*kathra*) of created beings. These are the loci (*maẓāhir*) in which God manifests Himself. Ḥaydar Āmulī labels this level of unity *tawḥīd ṣifātī* or *tawḥīd fiʿlī* (*Asrār*, 79 f.). The lowest level of unity corresponds to *tawḥīd al-dalīl* in the terminology of Ibn al-ʿArabī or *tawḥīd ulūhī/tawḥīd ulūhī ẓāhirī/tawḥīd al-anbiyāʾ* according to Ḥaydar Āmulī (*Asrār*, 70, 73–75; *Naṣṣ*, 355, 357, 404).

On the basis of the notion of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), Ibn Abī Jumhūr rejects the peripatetic understanding of being as an analogous term (*bi-l-tashkīk*), and he denies that existence is accidentally (*ʿāriḍan*) attached to the quiddities (*māhiyyāt*) of contingent things (*mumkināt*) when they exist. He rather identifies quiddities as archetypes (*aʿyān thābita*), which he defines, in agreement with Ibn al-ʿArabī and his followers, as things that are real in God's knowledge (*thābita fī ʿilmihi taʿālā*) irrespective of whether they exist in the external world or not. From the point of view of exclusive unity these are identical with God. As soon as they come into being in the external world, they are manifestations (*maẓāhir*) of the absolute being (*wujūd muṭlaq*) (*Mujlī*, 122–30 [2, 517–37]). Ibn Abī Jumhūr refrains from pursuing the notion of archetypes in his *Mujlī* any further, and he specifically does not employ Ibn al-ʿArabī's doctrine of creation as a twofold process of emanation, namely, essential theophany (*al-tajallī al-dhātī*) and sensuous theophany (*al-tajallī al-shuhūdī*), which Ibn al-ʿArabī had developed in this context (Chittick 1994, 17).

The mystical notion of the unity of existence further marks Ibn Abī Jumhūr's conceptualization of the divine attributes. While he followed in his earlier writings the doctrines of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī in denying the Bahshamite notion of the divine attributes as "states" (*aḥwāl*) and in taking the divine essence as the ontological basis of all of God's essential attributes that can be distinguished from each other mentally (*dhihnan*) on the basis of their respective characteristics (*aḥkām*), he distances himself from this view in his *Maslak* and his *Nūr*. In both works he maintains that the divine attributes are not additional to God's essence, neither in external reality (*khārijan*) nor mentally (*dhihnan*). In his *Mujlī*, Ibn Abī Jumhūr elaborates on this by arguing with the different levels of unity as had been defined by Ibn al-ʿArabī and his school. Divine attributes vanish at the highest level of *tawḥīd wujūdī*, whereas at the lower level of *tawḥīd ṣifātī* they can be observed as manifestations (*maẓāhir*) of the divine essence. As such, neither mentally nor externally could they be taken to be something additional to God's essence.

Mystical notions further influenced Ibn Abī Jumhūr's views regarding the issue of man's freedom to act. In his earlier writings he negated the Muʿtazilite concept of man as autonomous producer (*fāʿil*) of his actions. On the basis of the philosophical notion of causality, he had argued that man is only the immediate cause of his actions (*mubāshir qarīb li-afʿālihi*). Being himself contingent and as such an effect, the existence of immediate causes depends upon the existence of their respective causes that eventually depend on the Necessary Existent. On the other hand, Ibn Abī Jumhūr agrees with the earlier Muʿtazilites that the actions that proceed from man must rely on him (*istinād al-afʿāl al-ṣādira min al-ʿabīd ilaihim*). The concept of choice (*ikhtiyār*) and, thus, of divine justice (*ʿadl*) is thus maintained in his view: man, who is the immediate cause of his actions, is their "real cause" (*ʿilla bi-l-ḥaqīqa*), whereas God, the ultimate cause of man's actions, is not their real cause but rather their "cause in a metaphorical sense" (*ʿilla ʿalā sabīl al-majāz*). The correct position for Ibn Abī Jumhūr is therefore an intermediary one between the two extremes, determinism (*jabr*) and freedom of action (*tafwīḍ*).

In his *Mujli* Ibn Abī Jumhūr argues for a middle position between determinism and free will on the basis of the mystical notion of unity of existence. Considered from the level of the revealed law (*martabat al-sharīʿa*), the actions of man are attributable to him. From the more elevated point of view, the level of being, which allows a deeper insight into the true existential unity (*mutaʿammiq fī l-tawḥīd al-wujūdī al-ḥaqīqī*), all multiplicity (*kathra*) vanishes and the observer grasps that all is included in divine providence. The true understanding of the intermediary position between determinism and free will implies both levels of consideration simultaneously.

Another topic with respect to which Ibn Abī Jumhūr was deeply influenced by the mystical tradition is the realm of prophecy and imamate. Here he argues for the necessity of the prophetic mission and the installment of the imam, among other arguments, with the mystical notion of the necessary existence of the Perfect Man (*insān kāmil*). As manifestations of the divine completeness both the prophet and the imam serve as intermediary between the absolute, transcendent Divine and man who is needy and dependent on the corporeal. In addition, Ibn Abī Jumhūr adopts Ibn al-ʿArabī's notions of apostleship (*risāla*), prophethood (*nubuwwa*), and sainthood (*walāya*). In agreement with Twelver Shīʿī notions, however, he identifies sainthood with the imamate. Moreover, Ibn Abī Jumhūr rejects Ibn al-ʿArabī's identification of Jesus with the seal of absolute sainthood (*khatam al-walāya al-muqayyada*) and replaces him with Imām ʿAlī b. ʿAlī Ṭālib and the hidden Imām.

Ibn Abī Jumhūr's notions with respect to the realm of the promise and the threat (*al-waʿd wa-l-waʿīd*) are again in full agreement with the Twelver Shīʿī doctrine. On the basis of the definition that belief (*īmān*) solely consists of conviction in the heart and confirmation with the tongue, he rejects the Muʿtazilite definition of works being an integral part of belief. Accordingly, he considers the morally obliged man (*mukallaf*) who fulfills the main criterion of belief, namely, conviction in the heart (*taṣdīq bi-l-qalb*), to be a believer who is entitled to remain eternally in Paradise, irrespective of the quantity and severity of his acts of disobedience in this world. Further characteristically Twelver Shīʿī is Ibn Abī Jumhūr's notion that a sinner (*fāsiq*) who refrains from repenting can be released from punishment in the Hereafter either through God's immediate forgiveness (*ʿafw*) or through intercession (*shafāʿa*) either by the Prophet or the imams.

Ibn Abī Jumhūr underlying motivation to integrate the diverse elements consists in mediating between divergent, doctrinally apparently incompatible intellectual strands. His focus is on the divergences between theology and philosophy on the one hand and between Muʿtazilites and Ashʿarites on the other. With respect to all issues with regard to which Ibn Abī Jumhūr adopts the doctrines of the philosophers, he attempts to prove that their views do not disagree in fact from those of theology. In those issues that are related to divine justice Ibn Abī Jumhūr further attempts to harmonize Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarite notions with each other. This concerns particularly the question about the "why" of God's acting as well as the issue of man's actions that has been discussed earlier. On the basis of philosophy and mysticism he formulates an intermediary position from which he strives to neutralize the disagreements between the doctrines of the two schools. Arguing from his philosophical notion as to why God acts, combined with his distinction between the primary, essential purpose and the accidental purpose, he concludes that the Ashʿarite and the Muʿtazilite notions as to the "why" of God's acting do not differ as a matter of fact. The Muʿtazilite claim that God acts for a purpose is correct insofar as this applies to the specific advantages and benefits that follow necessarily from His perfect actions, which are based on an essential purpose. The Ashʿarite claim that God does not act on grounds of a purpose is likewise correct insofar as this means that the specific advantages and benefits are not intended on grounds of a primary purpose. Taking an intermediary position between determinism and free will, Ibn Abī Jumhūr concludes that the conflict between Muʿtazilites and Ashʿarites is in fact resolved. The difference of opinion between the two groups, he argues, is exclusively based on the fact that each group is maintaining a too extreme position. Whereas the Muʿtazilites overemphasize man's independence in his acting and consider him as the complete cause of his actions, the Ashʿarites mistakenly take God as the sole and immediate cause of all created beings, including human actions.

About eight years after having completed the *Mujlī* in 896/1490, Ibn Abī Jumhūr composed another theological treatise that was presumably his last work in this discipline (Schmidtke 2006, 2013; for a critical edition, see Ibn Abī Jumhūr, *Sharḥ*). The title of the work indicates its formal frame—it is a commentary (*sharḥ*) on the *Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar* of the ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325). At the end of the work the author reports that he composed the treatise following a request of a group of companions and that he completed it on 25 Dhū l-Qaʿda 904 / 4 July 1499 in Medina, where he sojourned during that year. Throughout the work the author repeatedly refers to his earlier works—namely the *Mujlī* and the *Maʿīn al-maʿīn*.

Ibn Abī Jumhūr maintains in his *Sharḥ* a more conventional theological stance than in any of his earlier extant works, especially the *Mujlī*. It is only occasionally that he attempts to mediate between Ashʿarites and Muʿtazilites or to harmonize the conflicting views of theology and philosophy. In central issues, such as the issue of God's actions, he considers the philosophers to be the principal opponents. The influence of mysticism in his *Sharḥ* is considerable. However, in contrast to his *Mujlī* this does not induce him to maintain a position in his *Sharḥ* that would be in conflict with central theological notions. Ibn Abī Jumhūr also treats Illuminationist thought with great care in his *Sharḥ*. On the issue of divine knowledge he refrains even from mentioning the Illuminationist doctrine of knowledge by presence. Regarding the fate of the human souls he still shows his sympathies for the doctrine of metempsychosis as upheld by the Illuminationists, while remaining faithful, as in the *Mujlī*, to the doctrine of bodily resurrection.

One can only speculate on the reasons for Ibn Abī Jumhūr's cautious approach in his *Sharḥ*. It cannot be excluded that he attempted to mediate between Muʿtazila and Ashʿariyya and between theology and philosophy only regarding those issues that were of special significance to him while skirting others that he deemed less important. However, the various contradictions within the text seem to speak against this view of his strategy.

More plausible as an explanation might be the dynamism that is found in the work. The author begins his commentary in the style of a conventional doctrinal treatise and only later starts to introduce elements going beyond the conventional theological framework. The entire introduction and nearly the entire chapter dealing with God and His attributes reflect characteristic Muʿtazilite notions. Only toward the end of the chapter does Ibn Abī Jumhūr deviate from this course when introducing the mystical notion of *tawḥīd* in his elaborations on God's unicity. This then determines his discussions in the following section on the conceptualization of divine attributes. The following chapter of the *Sharḥ* dealing with divine justice again starts off rather conventionally. This changes only in the fourth section of this chapter, where God's actions are dealt with. In the following sections there are other features of mediation between different strands of thought, for example, on the issue whether God is under any ethical obligation. The following chapters on prophecy, imamate, and resurrection contain many of the characteristic notions found in the *Mujlī*.

Ibn Abī Jumhūr states at the end of the work that he had presented his commentary to a group of students during his stay in Medina in 904/1499–1500. On the basis of the author's remark in the *Mujlī* it is known that he was reproached by a student in front of others. The attacker had accused him of adopting the philosophical view favoring the interpretation that from God only one effect occurs and creation should thus be understood as a process of hierarchical emanation over the view that God can immediately produce multiplicity.[10] It may have been criticism like this that induced the author to restrict himself to conventional theology in order to avoid further attacks. Perhaps trust developed between Ibn Abī Jumhūr and his students as time went on, so that he felt increasingly encouraged to express his own views more freely in this circle.

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[10] *Mujlī* 106–7 [1, 462]; cf. Schmidtke 2000, 89–94.

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CHAPTER 19

JALĀL AL-DĪN AL-DAWĀNĪ (D. 908/1502), GLOSSES ON ʿALĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-QŪSHJĪ'S COMMENTARY ON NAṢĪR AL-DĪN AL-ṬŪSĪ'S *TAJRĪD AL-IʿTIQĀD*

REZA POURJAVADY

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Asʿad al-Dawānī was born around 830/1426 in Dawān, a village near Kāzirūn in the southwest of the Iranian plateau. His early education was in Kāzirūn, where he studied with his father, Saʿd al-Dīn Asʿad, and Muẓhir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Murshidī al-Kāzirūnī. These two, who were both students of Zayn al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Jurjānī, known as al-Sayyid al-Sharīf (d. 816/1413), introduced him to *ḥadīth* literature, *fiqh, tafsīr*, and the "rational sciences" (*ʿaqliyyāt*), and Dawānī, through his association with them, regarded himself as Jurjānī's student. While still young he moved to Shiraz, where he studied with ʿAbd Allāh b. Maymūn al-Jīlī al-Kirmānī, Rukn al-Dīn Rūzbahān al-Wāʿiẓ al-ʿAmrī, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 864/1450), and Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kūshkinārī al-Anṣārī (Dawānī, *Unmūdhaj*, 275–78). Dawānī had established himself as a scholar already in his thirties when he was appointed *ṣadr* (head of the religious administration) by Qaraquyunlu Yūsuf (d. 872/1468), the ruler of Shiraz. For reasons that are not clear, he soon resigned from this post. When Aqquyunlu Ūzūn Ḥasan ascended to the throne in 872/1468, Dawānī established relations with him, mostly through his son Khalīl (d. 883/1478), at the time the provincial ruler of Shiraz and later

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to succeed his father for the brief period of one year. Later in his career, Dawānī enjoyed the patronage of the Ottoman sultan Bāyazīd II (r. 886/1481–918/1512) as well as Sultan Maḥmūd I of Gujarat (r. 863/1458–917/1511). In 903/1498–99, Qāsim Beg Purnāk, the Aqquyunlu ruler of Shiraz, confiscated most of his possessions. Shortly afterward, Dawānī left Shiraz and spent the following years in various small cities to the south of Shiraz. On 9 Rabīʿ II 908 / 11 October 1502, Dawānī died and was buried in his home village, Dawān (Pourjavady 2011, 4–14).

Dawānī was primarily a metaphysician. He saw himself as a philosopher inasmuch as he traced his teachers back to Avicenna (d. 428/1037). Beside Avicenna's philosophy, he was also interested in the philosophy of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191). On theological matters, however, he maintained Ashʿarite tendencies. This is evident, for instance, in his treatment of human will and action, his views on God's attributes, and to some extent his support of Ghazālī's condemnation of Avicenna for considering the world eternal. He is significant in the history of Islamic philosophy because he was representative of the last generation of the scholars who had a wider influence on the intellectual life of the Muslim world. Gradually from the sixteenth century, Iranian, Ottoman, and Indian-Muslim thought started to diverge. Dawānī's fame and influence were due to his several written and oral disputes with another outstanding scholar of Shiraz, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī (d. 903/1498; he was known at the time as "al-Ḥusaynī al-Shīrāzī"). These heated debates, which stretched over a period of more than two decades, not only significantly influenced Dawānī's and his intellectual competitor's thought, but also became widely disputed for centuries throughout the Islamic world—in Iran, the Ottoman lands, central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.

Dawānī wrote numerous works in various fields, namely logic, philosophy, theology, ethics, exegesis, legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), law, prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), geometry, and astronomy. Altogether, over ninety titles have been recorded. The following are the most significant works of Dawānī on logic, theology, philosophy, and ethics:

1. A commentary on the introduction of *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār* by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. ca. 685/1286), completed on 30 Rabīʿ II 853 / 25 May 1449
2. A Persian commentary on *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*, entitled *al-Tahlīliyya*, composed in 862/1457–58
3. *Al-Zawrā*, a mystically oriented philosophical treatise, written in 870/1466 at the request of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Fattāl, the keeper (*khādim*) of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's shrine in Najaf
4. *Al-Ḥawrā,* his autocommentary on the aforementioned *al-Zawrā*
5. A Persian compendium on practical philosophy (ethics, household management, and politics), titled *Lawāmiʿ al-ishrāq fī makārim al-akhlāq* (better known as *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*), written around 879/1474 and dedicated to Ūzūn Ḥasan and his son Khalīl
6. A Persian theological work, *Nūr al-hidāya*
7. A multisubject work, entitled *Unmūdhaj al-ʿulūm* (*Sample of the Sciences*), dedicated to Sultan Maḥmūd I of Gujarat

8. A commentary on ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's (d. 756/1356) *Risāla fī l-ʿAqāʾid*, completed in 905/1499–1500
9. An autocommentary on his collection of *Rubāʿiyyāt* (Persian), dedicated to the Ottoman Sultan Bāyazīd II
10. A treatise on human will, titled *Khalq al-aʿmāl*
11. A commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) *Ithbāt al-wājib al-mufāraq*
12. A supergloss on Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī's gloss on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 766/1364) arbitration between the two commentaries on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa-al-tanbīhāt*, namely those by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) (*Muḥākamāt bayna sharḥay al-Ishārāt*)
13. A commentary on Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's (d. 792/1390) *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*
14. A gloss on Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī's gloss on Shams al-Dīn al-Bukhārī's (fl. 733/1332) commentary on *Ḥikmat al-ʿayn* by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 675/1277)
15. A treatise on the definition of rational theology, titled *Nubadh min al-kalām fī taʿrīf ʿilm al-kalām*, completed in 893/1488 and dedicated to a certain Mīr Muḥibb Allāh
16. A commentary on Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī's *Hayākil al-nūr*, titled *Shawākil al-ḥūr*
17. A supergloss on Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī's gloss on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on *al-Shamsiya fī al-manṭiq* by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī

18–19. Two Persian treatises on justice, titled *Risāla dar bayān-i māhīyat-i ʿadālat u aḥkām-i ān*

20–21. Two treatises on the proofs of the existence of the Necessary Existent and His attributes (*Risālat Ithbāt al-wājib wa-ṣifātihi*), known as the "old" (*qadīma*) and the "new" (*al-jadīda*) treatises

22–23. Two sets of superglosses on Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī's gloss on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on the *Maṭāliʿ al-anwār* by Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī

24–26. Three sets of glosses on ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Qūshjī's (d. 879/1474) commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, known as the "Old Gloss" (*qadīma*)," the "New Gloss" (*al-jadīda*)," and the "Newest Gloss" (*ajadd*) (Pūrjavādī 1377sh/1998, 87–126). In the last two glosses Dawānī mainly responded to the criticisms of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī.

Dawānī taught in Shiraz over a period of more than twenty-five years. Among the texts of earlier authors that he taught were (1) Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt* together with Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's arbitration between the two commentaries on *al-Ishārāt*, namely those by Ṭūsī and Rāzī (*Muḥākamāt bayna sharḥay al-Ishārāt*), (2) Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* together with Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī's (d. 710/1311) commentary on the text; (3) his own commentary on *Hayākil al-nūr, Shawākil al-ḥūr fī Sharḥ hayākil al-nūr*; (4) al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī's commentary on the *Mawāqif* of ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī; (5) Qūshjī's commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* together with his own glosses (*ḥāshiya qadīma* and presumably his *ḥāshiya jadīda*) on it; (6) Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Taḥrīr kitāb Uqlīdis*; (7) Qāḍīzāde Rūmī's (d. ca. 844/1440) commentary on Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Jaghmīnī's (d. 745/1344) *al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī l-hayʾa*; (8) Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on al-Kātibī's *al-Shamsiyya fī l-Manṭiq*, together with al-Jurjānī's glosses on it.

The controversy between Dawānī and Dashtakī animates a number of their respective writings, especially their glosses on Qūshjī's commentary on Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*. This is what we are going to focus on for the rest of this chapter.

19.1. EARLY COMMENTARIES AND GLOSSES ON ṬŪSĪ'S *TAJRĪD AL-IʿTIQĀD*

The "Epitome of Belief" (*Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*) is a Twelver Shīʿite creed written by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī late in his career, in (or shortly before) 667/1268 (Ḥabībī, 696). It has six chapters (*maqṣad*): chapter 1, on metaphysics, containing three sections (*fuṣūl*): (1) on existence and nonexistence, (2) on quiddity and related matters such as unity and multiplicity, and (3) on the cause and the caused; chapter 2, on substance and accidents, containing five sections: (1) on substance, (2) on bodies, (3) some other judgments on bodies, (4) on the separate substances, namely the Intellects and the Souls, and (5) on accidents; chapter 3, on theology proper (*ilāhiyyāt*), containing three sections: (1) on God's existence, (2) on His attributes, (3) on His actions; chapter 4, on prophecy; chapter 5, on the imamate; chapter 6, on the resurrection.

Ṭūsī's Twelver Shīʿite student, Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥillī (known as al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, d. 726/1326) wrote a commentary on this work that was completed in 696/1296. Ḥillī's lemmatized commentary might have played a significant role in establishing the text of this creed. This commentary, entitled *Revealing the Intention* (*Kashf al-murād*), seems to have been taught by Ḥillī in his theological courses. A few decades after Ḥillī, an Ashʿarite theologian, Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 749/1348), composed another commentary on this work, entitled *Contriving the Principles* (*Tasdīd al-qawāʿid*), known later on as "The Old Commentary" (*al-Sharḥ al-qadīm*). Iṣfahānī composed this commentary while he resided in Tabriz at the request of the Ilkhanid vizier, Tāj al-Dīn ʿAlī Shāh (d. 724/1324) (Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, 116, 166–67). The extensive discussions of this commentary on various subjects opened a new platform for philosophical discourses. At the turn of the ninth/fourteenth century this commentary was glossed by another Ashʿarite theologian, al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. Jurjānī composed this gloss presumably while he was teaching in Samarkand. His gloss covers the first two chapters of the text, that is, the chapters dealing with general metaphysics (*umūr ʿāmma*) and substance and attributes. Like some other works of his, this gloss, became a textbook of theology/

philosophy and the subject of many superglosses in the following centuries (Ṣadrāyī Khūyī 1382sh/2003, 47–58).

About half a century after Jurjānī's composition of the gloss, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Qūshjī, who was likewise an Ashʿarite scholar, commented on *Tajrīd* once again; the result was known later as "The New Commentary" (*al-Sharḥ al-jadīd*). Originally from Samarkand, Qūshjī was primarily an astronomer. However, as he himself indicated in the introduction to this commentary, he spent some part of his life (*shaṭaran min ʿumrī*) studying theology and philosophy. Qūshjī wrote this commentary sometime after 853/1449, while he was staying in Herat. He dedicated it to the Timurid Abū Saʿīd (r. 854/1451–872/1469). During Qūshjī's lifetime the commentary on the *Tajrīd* was already widely esteemed. The two eminent philosophers Dawānī and Dashtakī wrote glosses on Qūshjī's commentary. While staying in Tabriz, Dawānī and Dashtakī might have become acquainted with Qūshjī in person. Qūshjī seems to have been familiar with some of Dawānī's philosophical opinions. It is reported that he expressed an unfavorable comment on Dawānī's solution for the liar paradox (Dawānī 2007, 150–51).

19.2. Dashtakī's "Old Gloss" on Qūshjī's Commentary

Dashtakī seems to have been the first to complete a gloss on Qūshjī's commentary. The date of completion of this gloss is not known. But since he wrote this gloss prior to the first gloss by Dawānī, it must have been written before 883/1478. Dictated to an anonymous student, the gloss by Dashtakī, known later as Dashtakī's "Old Gloss," covers the beginning of the text up to the end of section 4 of chapter 2, on "Separable Substances" (Dashtakī [1-1], fol. 142a). Dashtakī explains in the introduction that his intention in composing this gloss is to reveal and resolve the intricacies of the text. What he actually did was, among other things, to challenge the main metaphysical principle of Ṭūsī in *Tajrīd*, on the basis of which he tries to explain God's existence.

In his *Tajrīd*, Ṭūsī's explanation of the interrelation between existence and quiddity is concise and dispersed. But gathering his indications here and there, we can see that, for him, existence is something superadded to the quiddity of things. This seems to be similar to his view in his commentary on Avicennā's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*. There Ṭūsī asserts the following:

> Anything whose existence is not within the concept of its quiddity in part or its quiddity as a whole, the existence [of that thing] does not subsist in its quiddity (*muqawwim lahu fī māhiyyatihi*), but it is rather accidental (*ʿāriḍ*) to it. (Ṭūsī, 3/57)

The Necessary Existent, that is, God, is an exception. His existence is not accidentally superadded to His quiddity (Ḥillī, *Kashf*, 90). Ṭūsī refers to God's existence as a special existence (*wujūd khāṣṣ*). In this way, he distinguishes between His existence and absolute existence (*wujūd muṭlaq*) that can be applied to contingent things. In his commentary on *Ishārāt*, he explains this idea as follows:

> What is meant is that the existence that is within the quiddity of the Necessary Existent is not the common existence that exists only in the intellect; it is rather the special existence that is the first origin of all existents. And since it does not have any parts, it is the quiddity itself. That is what they meant by saying "His quiddity is His existence." (Ṭūsī, 3/58)

The above idea is in fact based on Avicennian philosophy, or rather Ṭūsī's interpretation of Avicennan philosophy. But Ṭūsī is arguably not entirely faithful to Avicennan metaphysics. In his *Tajrīd*, he argues that existence is a "second intelligible," and what he means by that is that existence is something purely conceptual (Ḥillī, *Kashf*, 97). The term "second intelligible," which was coined by Fārābī, refers to a concept that applies to another concept, something that is predicated of "intelligibles" in the mind rather than directly of external things, like the concepts of species or genus. In his *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, Fārābī argues that existence is a second intelligible. That means that it does not have extramental reality (Menn 2008, 79). Avicenna did not subscribe to this idea of Fārābī. To him, the existence of F is accidental (*ʿāriḍ*) to F's quiddity, and it is extrinsic to the quiddity of F (Menn 2011, 69–71). Surprisingly, Ṭūsī is more Fārābian on this matter than Avicennan. In his commentary on *Ishārāt*, Ṭūsī does not use the term "second intelligible." Nevertheless, he maintained that existence has reality in the intellect (*fī l-ʿaql*) only. In his *Tajrīd*, Ṭūsī uses the term "second intelligible" and seems to believe that the existence of F is extrinsic to the quiddity of F only in the mind and not in the outside world. There is only one exception and that is God, whose existence is identical to His quiddity. If God's existence were conceptual, then it would have been caused like every other conceptual matter. To avoid this and other possible problems, God's existence, the special existence, needs to be taken as an exception. Therefore, Ṭūsī argues that the existence that is a second intelligible is the absolute (*muṭlaq*) existence, unlike the special (*khāṣṣ*) existence that is *in re*. In their commentaries on this point, Iṣfahānī, Jurjānī, and Qūshjī all accepted this assumption of Ṭūsī's and only elaborated the idea further and systematized it.

Ṭūsī's distinction between God's existence and that of contingents seems to have been one of the things that Dashtakī refers to as "complexities." Dashtakī argues that Ṭūsī on this matter used *wujūd* (existence) in a loose way (*musāmaḥatan*). What he really meant was *mawjūd* (existent). For God is a different type of existent and not existence (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 4a–b). God insofar as He exists is not an exception. He is an individual existent. According to Dashtakī, what philosophers meant by saying that God's existence is identical with His essence is that He does not have any quiddity, not that he has a quiddity that is existence. He recommends that people read the metaphysics of Avicenna's *Shifāʾ* for more details on this matter instead of relying on the highly abbreviated treatment of the issue in the *Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 10a). The reason that God does not have any quiddity is that if He had one, it would have been permissible to ask what He is. But this question cannot be applied to God due to the impossibility of apprehending Him by the intellect (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 10a). Dashtakī attributes his own view to Avicenna. However, he consciously departs from Avicenna in other parts of his metaphysics by denying that existence is accidental to quiddity altogether (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 11a). He maintains that existence is what the intellect abstracts from the existents in the outside world. Dashtakī does not describe existence as a "second intelligible," and it seems that for some reason he was uncomfortable using this term for existence. Nevertheless he regards existence as something conceptual and mental. Yet he argues that even in the mind existence is not accidental to quiddity in contingents and that it is misleading to articulate the relation between quiddity and existence in this way. The term "accidental," he maintains, contains the sense of being posterior, whereas existence is prior (*muqaddam*) to quiddity. If we take a human being, for instance, we should first determine his or her existence, because a nonexistent human is not human and there is no way whatsoever to distinguish a nonexistent human from absolute nonexistence (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 10a–11a). This is approximately the outline of what Dashtakī reveals about his metaphysics in this gloss. Obviously he left many gaps since he was writing a gloss on an earlier work and was not trying to be systematic.

19.3. DAWĀNĪ'S "OLD GLOSS" ON QŪSHJĪ'S COMMENTARY

In the introduction to his first gloss on Qūshjī's commentary, Dawānī praises the commentator for his justified modifications (*al-taṣarrufāt al-ṣaḥīḥa*) of some of Ṭūsī's ideas throughout the commentary. But he adds that no one, except the prophets, is immune from error (*hafwa*). He then claims that he had glossed some early parts of this commentary a while back. The date of this first draft is roughly indicated by Dawānī to be before Ūzūn Ḥasan's victory over his rivals—that is to say, before 872/1469. It is not clear why Dawānī mentions this date. Perhaps he wants to say that he had engaged with this commentary even before Dashtakī did so. His initial intention in writing the gloss was to respond to criticisms of Jurjānī's positions. But he did more than that and, as he explicitly declared, he presented some remarks that could not be found in "the common books" (*al-kutub al-mutadāwala*). His introduction ends with his praise of Ūzūn Ḥasan's son, Khalīl, as the sultan. This indicates that the gloss must have been completed in 882/1477 or early 883/1478, that is, during the short period that Khalīl was sultan (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 1b–5a). As is evident from most copies of this gloss, Dawānī later added further glosses to the "Old Gloss" and changed its dedicatee from Khalīl to Yaʿqūb (r. 883/1478–896/1490) (Pourjavady 2011, 11).

Dawānī's gloss covers the first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter of the commentary, that is, the chapters dealing with general metaphysics and substance and attributes. He does not refer to Dashtakī's gloss. But it is clear that he had it at his disposal while writing his own gloss since many of his comments are actually meant to respond to Dashtakī's arguments.

Like Ṭūsī, Dawānī argues that the existence predicated of God and the existence predicated of contingents are not one and the same. But he diminishes the existence of the contingents in favor of God's existence even further. Presumably stimulated by Dashtakī's distinction between *wujūd* and *mawjūd*, he notes the disadvantage of *mawjūd* as a term used to predicate existence in Arabic philosophical terminology. Being "paronymous" (*mushtaqq*), the meaning of this word is not self-evident, whereas *wujūd*, from which this term is derived, is a self-evident concept (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 8a). Philosophers, Dawānī states, used the term *mawjūd* in two different senses: first for something of which existence is predicated, and second for something self-subsistent, identical with existence (*ʿaynuhu*) in the external world (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 41a). But whereas the first is the true sense of the term, the second is the result of using this term metaphorically (*majāzan*) or in a rather loose way (*musāmaḥatan*) (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 41a, 43a). *Mawjūd* in the first sense is a second intelligible; that is, there is nothing corresponding to *mawjūd* in the external world (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 33a–34a). To confirm his argument, Dawānī quotes from Bahmanyār's *Taḥṣīl* that "when we say something is *mawjūd*, we mean that *wujūd* is external (*khārij*) to it" (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 42a). Being external means being "accidental" to the quiddity, using Avicenna's terminology. This accidental addition to the quiddity is conceptual or, as Dawānī describes it, "unreal" (*ghayr ḥaqīqī*). By saying that "that thing exists," nothing is added to the quiddity of that thing extramentally. It is only an indication that that thing is created. To Dawānī, everything except the Necessary Existent is a *mawjūd*. The Necessary Existent is the only true existence, and deserves to be referred to as *wujūd*. His existence is the only existence with reality outside the mind, since it has been established by Avicenna that everything possesses a quiddity that is distinct from its existence except the Necessary Existent, whose quiddity is identical with His existence (*inniyya*) (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 43b–44a). The statement "His quiddity is His existence" means that the existence of the Necessary Existent is intrinsic to His quiddity, unlike the contingents, whose existence is extrinsic to their quiddities (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 42a). The Necessary Existent is pure and self-subsistent, free from any restrictions and notional qualifications (*iʿtibārāt*). Dawānī maintains that existence in its true sense is a unique individual (*fard*), identical with the Necessary Existent. Contingents receive only a "portion" (*ḥissa*) not of true existence (which is God) but of "absolute existence" (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), which is a second intelligible. They exist in the sense that they are created and caused by an agent. The intellect can differentiate between the existence of a contingent and its quiddity. For the Necessary Existent, however, this is impossible for the intellect.

In a passage of this gloss, Dawānī ascribes the above-mentioned idea as "the insight of metaphysicians" (*dhawq al-mutaʾallihīn*):

> According to the insight of metaphysicians (*mutaʾallihūn*), *wujūd* cannot be truly ascribed to contingent beings, but the *wujūd* of the Necessary Existent has a relation

> with them that makes it correct to use a paronym (*al-mushtaqq*) for them. (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 43a)

Dawānī does not specify whom he means by "metaphysicians." Nevertheless, he states that Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā would have agreed with this idea if it had been presented to them, since in principle it accords with their view. Evidence for this is their assertion in their works that the customary application of the term *mawjūd* to the Necessary Existent is metaphorical (*majāz*) (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 43b).

Dawānī also differentiates between two types of predication (*ḥaml*): primary predication (*al-ḥaml al-awwalī*) and regular predication (*al-ḥaml al-shāʾiʿ al-mutaʿāraf*). The former, Dawānī explains, is produced when the predicate is conceptually identical with the subject, like a simple tautology ("Zayd is (or is not) Zayd"), or something identical with the subject but under a different respect (*baʿd al-taghāyur al-iʿtibārī*), as when we say, "Existence is (or is not) quiddity" or "Existence is (or is not) unity." Regular predication is used when the subject is an individual or a part of a class, as when we say, "Humans are animal" (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 20a, 33b). Dawānī uses this distinction to explain the distinction between the existence of God and that of contingents. He argues that when we say, "The Necessary Existent exists," the predication is of the primary type. That is because Necessary Existence is identical with existence. But for the contingents, the predication is of the regular type, as when we say, "Humans exist," which means that there are humans in the extramental world (*fī l-khārij*) (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 20a; Abū Turābī 1388sh/2009, 10).

Unlike Dashtakī, Dawānī believes that there is a difference between a nonexistent human and absolute nonexistence. The latter is something about which we know nothing (*lā yukhbar ʿanhu*), whereas we know about the former that it does not exist (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fol. 47b). Dawānī explains that a contingent entity, before being created/caused, is a possibility that is intermediate between existence and nonexistence. It is the Necessary Existent who gives it the necessity to exist. The existence of the contingent is in fact this necessity given by Him (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 61b–62a). So the creation of contingents is not ex nihilo for Dawānī in the true sense, since to him quiddities as such were not the subject of creation. The Necessary Existent provides (*yattaṣif*) these quiddities with existence (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 1, fols. 63b–64a).

19.4. Lārī's Supplement to Dawānī's Old Gloss

Shortly after its composition, Dawānī's gloss was supplemented by one of Dawānī's students, identified in the manuscript tradition as "al-Lārī," who might be Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn al-Lārī (d. after 918/1512). However, we cannot be sure that Lārī's task was restricted to writing the supplement (*mulḥaqāt*). The fact that Dawānī's gloss appears always with this supplement might be an indication that Lārī was also involved in editing and compiling his teacher's gloss. Little is known about Lārī, although he seems to have been an outstanding figure in his time. It is to him that Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī refers when, in the introduction to his glosses on the *Tajrīd*, he mentions "one of the greatest and most excellent students" (*baʿḍ min ʿuẓamāʾ fuḍalāʾ al-ṭullāb*). If he is indeed identical with Kamāl al-Dīn al-Lārī, we know that later in life he taught in Shiraz and commented upon two other writings of Dawānī's: a commentary on Dawānī's *al-Zawrāʾ*, entitled *Taḥqīq al-Zawrāʾ*, completed in 918/1512–13; and a separate supergloss on Dawānī's aforementioned gloss on Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd* (Ṣadrāyī Khūyī 1324/2003, 83–84). Moreover, he wrote a gloss on Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī's commentary on the *Tajrīd*, titled *Taḥqīq al-Tajrīd*, and a treatise on the uniqueness of the Necessary Existent, entitled *Taḥqīq al-tawḥīd* (Pourjavady 2011, 76).

19.5. DASHTAKĪ'S "NEW GLOSS"

Five years after Dawānī's composition of this gloss, in 887/1482 or shortly before, Dashtakī composed his "New Gloss" on Qūshjī's commentary. The date of composition is known because the work was dedicated to Ottoman Sultan Bāyezīd II, and the mediator who took this gloss as a gift to the sultan was Muʾayyadzāde ʿAbd al-Rahmān Efendī (d. 922/1516) (Lārī, *Mirʿāt*, 104). Since Muʾayyadzāde is known to have left Shiraz for Istanbul in 887/1482 (Pourjavady 2014, 11, 19), the date of composition must be in the same year or shortly before. The gloss mainly targets Dawānī's positions, and, for this reason, it can be mainly regarded as a supergloss on Dawānī's Old Gloss. It is more organized than Dashtakī's previous gloss. Whereas the latter was dictated by the author to one of his students, in writing the New Gloss Dashtakī was assisted by his son, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr. He explicitly mentions in the introduction that "some achievements" (*nubadh min tawfīqāt*) of his son Manṣūr are included in the work (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 1b). Yet the gloss is not altogether new. The author incorporated at least some parts of the Old Gloss in it. Moreover, even years after the completion of the first draft of the gloss in 887/1482, Dashtakī continued expanding this gloss. Evidence for this is some of the quotations of Dashtakī from Dawānī's "Newest Gloss" (see, for instance, Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 66a). In the introduction, Dashtakī explains his motivation for writing this gloss as follows:

> I had first written on *al-Sharḥ al-jadīd li-l-Tajrīd* [i.e., Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd*] what had come to my mind while I was studying, discussing and debating it with others. Then I realized that a venerable man among the people (*baʿḍ ajillat al-nās*) [i.e., Dawānī] was mistaken and confused about the text and the commentary and had altered the context of words in such a way that what was intended by them is lost. Thus he had constructed flimsy conclusions like spiderwebs. This could deceive a weak student whose first consideration is the speaker rather than what is being

> said, and because of his noble position [that student] accepts these unreliable words that are not worthy of attention. I was [also] apprised of what has been written on the book by one of the greatest and most excellent students [i.e., Lārī], [which showed that] he was unable to distinguish the husk from the kernel or the mirage from water. This motivated me to write for the second time glosses [on that work], in order to do justice to the commentary and its glosses. [In this latest gloss] I deal only with the issues discussed in the commentary and the glosses, and try to explain complexities and difficulties that have baffled scholars. (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 1b)

As indicated in the above quotation, Dashtakī's efforts in this gloss are intended to elucidate how Dawānī altered the context of the discussions and to criticize Dawānī's philosophical opinions. Therein he refers sarcastically to Dawānī's ontological doctrine as "the insight of metaphysicians." To him, Dawānī's discussion on this matter is a mixed-up combination of some paradoxical statements of the Sufis with philosophical issues (*wa-kāna hādhā l-qāʾil khalaṭa shaṭran min shaṭḥiyyāt al-ṣūfiyya bi-l-maṭālib al-ḥikmiyya*). He admits that Dawānī put forward some innovations, but he calls these "spiderwebs." He again argues that the Necessary Existent is *mawjūd*, just like contingent beings. The Necessary Existent exists in the same way that contingents do. The difference between the Necessary Existent and contingents is that the former has no quiddity, whereas all other existents have quiddity. Here he confronts Ṭūsī by saying that he seems to have been unfamiliar (*lam yaṭṭaliʿ*) with the assertions of Avicenna in his *Shifāʾ*, as, in his commentary on the *Ishārāt*, he seems to think that He has a quiddity, which is existence. Dashtakī implies that Dawānī's argument, to the effect that the quiddity of the Necessary Existent is its existence, is based on Ṭūsī's mistaken interpretation of Avicenna's philosophy (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 61b). He targets Dawānī's explanation of God's existence being identical with His quiddity too. For Dawānī, this formula indicates the fact that the intellect cannot differentiate between God's existence and His quiddity. To Dashtakī this is not convincing at all, because there might be other things whose existence and quiddity cannot be distinguished by the intellect (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fols. 64a–65b). He argues also against the view of Dawānī's that existence in the true sense is God. To him this would make sense if Dawānī believed that God has an undetermined reality (*ḥaqīqa ghayr mutaʿayyana*), in the same way that some Sufis (presumably he is referring to Ibn ʿArabī and his followers) describe Him. But Dawānī does not subscribe to this idea, at least not fully, for he argues that God's reality is something essentially specific and determined. According to Dashtakī, this suggests that, in his discussion, Dawānī mixed up some statements of the Sufis with philosophical issues without thinking them through and realizing that they are irreconcilable (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 65b).

To explain why Fārābī and Avicenna said that the use of the term *mawjūd* for the Necessary Existent is metaphorical, Dashtakī argues that *mawjūd* primarily means *mā lahu al-wujūd* ("that which has existence"). He explains that the word *mā* here means *shayʾ* ("thing") and that Fārābī and Avicenna used *shayʾ* to refer to quiddities. For them, according to Dashtakī, the Necessary Existent is not a thing (*shayʾ*), because It has no quiddity. Nevertheless, because of the limitations of language, *mawjūd* is also used for the Necessary Existent. In this case, however, the use of the term is metaphorical (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 20a). As for the contingent beings, Dashtakī claims that "existent" and "thing" (*shay'*) are coapplicable (*musāwiq*). When Dawānī rejects their true existence, he is also denying that they are things (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 61b). He agrees with Dawānī that the general assumption that existence is sustained by quiddity is wrong. Nevertheless, unlike Dawānī, who used this to differentiate between true and untrue existence, he differentiates between existence in the mind and outside the mind. Existence in the mind is accidental to quiddity and sustained by it. But in extramental reality existence is not sustained by quiddity. The two are unified with each other, and it is even correct to say that existence has priority over quiddity (Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fols. 101b–102a). In sum, the extramental existence is either unified with quiddity, which is the case of the contingents, or it is just there with no quiddity, which is the case of the specific existence, the Necessary Existence.

19.5.1. Liar Paradox

Metaphysical issues are not the only subjects of disagreement between Dashtakī and Dawānī. Several logical and epistemological matters became the subject of disputes between the two in Dashtakī's New Gloss. Examples are the relational syllogism and mental existence (for more details of these debates see El-Rouayheb 2010, 92–104 and Pourjavady 2011, 99–101). Another highly controversial matter was the liar paradox, which first appeared in Dashtakī's New Gloss. The paradox had been known to some early Islamic theologians, but from the seventh/thirteenth century onward logicians focused on it even more (see Alwishah and Sanson 2009). This paradox had not been discussed in Dawānī's first gloss, and Dashtakī could hardly justify discussing it within the context of the *Tajrīd*. It has been raised first by Dashtakī in an oral dispute with Dawānī (Dawānī, *Muntakhab*, 79). Be that as it may, the earliest account by Dashtakī, as well as Dawānī's positions on the liar paradox, is included in Dashtakī's New Gloss. Dashtakī first presents the solutions of previous logicians from the seventh/thirteenth century to his own time and argues against them. Then he presents his own solution by distinguishing two types of judgments from each other: (1) straightforward judgments, for example, "It is raining," and (2) compound judgments, for example, "It is raining is true/false." The latter actually consists of two judgments that need to be evaluated in sequence. Dashtakī explains that the truth or falsity of the compound judgment depends on that of the first judgment. The judgment "Whatever I say now is a lie" is, Dashtakī asserts, a compound judgment whose truth or falsity should be dealt with in two sequences or orders (*marratayn*), the first one of which is "what I say now." But the former judgment, "what I say now," is identical with the asserting judgment, and this makes it unqualified to be taken as true or false. Consequently, there is no ground for evaluating the compound judgment as a whole (Dashtakī, *Muntakhab*, 14–15; Dashtakī, *Ḥāshiya* 2, fols. 113b–14a).

19.6. DAWĀNĪ'S "NEW GLOSS" ON QŪSHJĪ'S COMMENTARY ON *TAJRĪD AL-IʿTIQĀD*

According to Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1019/1610–11), Dawānī completed his second gloss, which became known as his "New Gloss" (*al-Ḥāshiya al-jadīda*), in 897/1491–92 (Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, 2/225). As is indicated by Dawānī in his later "Newest Gloss," the title of the gloss was *Outlines of the Veils and Exaltations of the Glosses* (*Tajrīdāt al-ghawāshī wa-tashyīdāt al-ḥawāshī*). So far, copies of this work have not been properly identified. Even at the time of Shūshtarī, apparently, not many copies of this work were available. Again Shūshtarī informs us that this gloss covers the early part of the commentary up to the discussion on mental existence, which is in the first section of the first chapter of the book (Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, 2/225). Following the composition of this gloss, Dashtakī revised and expanded his New Gloss to respond to Dawānī's recent positions. This in turn prompted Dawānī to do the same.

19.7. DAWĀNĪ'S NEWEST GLOSS ON QŪSHJĪ'S COMMENTARY ON THE *TAJRĪD*

Dawānī then wrote his third gloss on Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd*, which was known later on as "Newest Gloss" (*al-ḥāshiya al-ajadd*). This work covers the discussions of the first chapter (*maqṣad*) of the work up to the middle of its second section (*faṣl*) on quiddity (Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, 2/225). In the introduction to his gloss Dawānī writes:

> A long time ago, I wrote glosses on *al-Sharḥ al-jadīd li-l-Tajrīd* [i.e., *al-ḥāshiya al-qadīma*], which became widely circulated and popular. Consequently, the blood of anger and jealousy pulsated in the veins of one of the people of the region, who then took measures, on the one hand, by fabricating and altering the context of [my] words, and, on the other, by presenting some sophistries and criticisms containing contentions and arguments [regarding my positions]. So I set about refuting those sophistries and clarifying my positions, and appended treatises to the glosses, naming them *Tajrīdāt al-ghawāshī wa-tashyīdāt al-ḥawāshī* [*The Outlines of the Veils and Exaltations of the Glosses*, i.e., *al-ḥāshiya al-jadīda*]. These treatises became popular with students and were circulated among friends. Thereupon, the two sides exchanged views several times, through which I was able to contact him in person.
>
> Then after a while I became ill, which prevented me from doing even simple things, let alone carrying out discussions or disputations. He then resumed those arguments and sophistries, taking up his earlier positions, repeating the same arguments, criticizing [me] harshly, and insisting on his view. He thought that no one would later challenge what he said, and forgot the subtle ways of destiny. These

> [reiterations of his views] spread among a small number of savage partisans, whom he gathered around [himself] with his false promises. They covered their slates with these words and wasted their quires. [But] he did not propose anything new. Stripped of the viciousness of repetition, those harsh arguments would have conveyed nothing but the same old invective. He combined these false and incoherent sophistries like someone who makes clothes from the reverse side of cloth and presents it for sale. However, it is very unlikely that "the camel passes through the needle of the tailor" [Q 7:40]. They [i.e., those sophistries] do not rise from the ground and do not even move a jot.
>
> My companions requested that I should present the truth, remove the veil from the sight of observers and eliminate doubtful points from the path of the students, particularly those who are innocently mistaken. At first I was hesitant to waste my precious time on reading such poor arguments—this kind of investigation was for those with weaker minds. Moreover, I am not like those people who only feel satisfied when theirs is the final word [on a subject], regarding their own view as bringing the matter to a close. Nonetheless, when they repeatedly persisted [in this request], I began [to write] it, spending [only] some of my spare time on it, regarding it as an entertainment and something to keep me away from boredom. (al-Dawānī *Ḥāshiya* 2, fol. 1b; Pourjavady 2011, 79–80)

According to Shūshtarī, Dawānī started writing this gloss around 896/1490; it took him some years to complete it and therefore its completion followed the completion of his "Outlines" (*Tajrīdāt*) in 897/1491 (Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, 2/225). If indeed the composition of this work was started before the completion of Dawānī's second gloss, we can conclude that because of Dashtakī's revision and expansion of his New Gloss, Dawānī knew that his second gloss would not satisfactorily respond to Dashtakī's criticisms and therefore started composing a new set of glosses while the previous one was not yet completed.

In this gloss, Dawānī quotes on each issue the entire counterargument of Dashtakī, to whom he refers as "the objector" (*al-muʿtariḍ*), followed by his own response. Here his ontological doctrine is presented in a more developed way. Again he differentiates between the concepts of existent (*mawjūd*) and existence (*wujūd*) and argues that contingent beings originate from existence and their being existent is based on their relation (*ʿalāqa*) to Him. Only those who are firm in their judgment (*al-rāsikhūn fī l-ḥukm*) can apprehend the relation between the two. But there are conclusive ways to explain the distinction. His first and main argument for this is that the general understanding of existence is wrong. People generally imagine (*yatawahhamu*) that existent is something sustained by quiddities. But "the metaphysicians" (*mutaʾallihūn*) have established that existence is by no means sustained by quiddities. It is rather self-sustained. This self-sustained existence is the one referred to as the "specific existence" (*al-wujūd al-khāṣṣ*). But in this true sense, God is the only existence. In other cases, what we refer to as "existence," which is applicable to contingent's entities, is something accidental, a reality that is acquired from the agent (*ḥaqīqa muktasaba min al-fāʿil*). This existence is a second intelligible and therefore the intellect can differentiate it from the quiddity.

The second way in which Dawānī explains the difference between God's existence and contingents' existence is through a long discussion of categorical propositions (*ḥamliyyāt*). Following Avicenna, he distinguishes two types of "whether-it-is-ness propositions" (*haliyyāt*) from each other:

1. The existential propositions in which existence is a predicate; that is, the notion of existence used in our saying, "Does the thing exist (*hal al-shayʾ mawjūd*^{un}) or does it not exist?"
2. The propositions in which *mawjūd* is a mere copula; that is, the notion we use in our saying, "Is such-and-such such-and-such (*hal kadhā yūjadu kadhā*)?"

Whereas the second type contains subject, predicate, and copula, the first type seems to have two parts only, namely subject and predicate. In the second type existence serves only to relate one thing to the other. Dawānī quotes from Suhrawardī, who had referred to this type of existence as relational (*nisbī*). To Dawānī this is the same type of existence used in the existential proposition. He argues that in both of these two types of propositions the existence of the subject is presupposed/implied. When we say, "John is tall," it is assumed that John exists. The same is true about the existential propositions like "John exists"; the existence of John is presupposed in this proposition. Therefore "John exists" is another way of saying "John is in the extramental world." But we can draw this conclusion from "John is tall" or even from the tautological statement "John is John." Dawānī, as he himself says explicitly, adopted this idea from Avicennan logic. For Avicennian logicians, "Every A is B" presupposes that there is at least one A in existence. But Dawānī goes one step further by proposing that even in existential propositions, existence is a mere copula. There is only one exception, and that is when the subject of the existential proposition is the Necessary Existent. In this case, since the predicate, existence, is identical with the subject, existence is not the copula but the predicate (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 3, fols. 114b–19b).

Dawānī targets Dashtakī's ontology with several criticisms. He criticizes Dashtakī's denial of existence being accidental to quiddity for contingents. This, to him, is a self-evident mental process: one first thinks of a quiddity and then makes the judgment of whether it exists or not. In other words, the existence or nonexistence of the quiddity is not the criterion to conceive the quiddity (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 3, fol. 123b). The second point of criticism is Dashtakī's description of the Necessary Existence as existence with no quiddity. Dawānī states that Avicenna used the terms "essence" (*dhāt*) and "reality" (*ḥaqīqa*) for the Necessary Existence and that these are alternative expressions for quiddity. Beside quiddity, essence, and reality, there are some other equivalent terms, such as "nature" (*ṭabīʿa*) or "individuality" (*shakhṣ*). One way or another, one needs to use at least one of these expressions for God, because something with no essence is absolute nonexistence (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 3, fol. 123b). Dawānī also rejects Dashtakī's distinction between God and contingents based on having or not having quiddity and again emphasizes that the difference is whether or not the intellect can differentiate between their quiddity and existence. Whereas it is possible to do so with respect to the contingents, it is impossible with respect to God (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 3, fol. 124a).

19.7.1. Liar Paradox

Dashtakī's discussion of the liar paradox prompted Dawānī to include the issue in the "Newest Gloss." Following Dashtakī's New Gloss, there are some exchanges between Dawānī and Dashtakī on the issue that were used by Dawānī in this gloss. But first, Dawānī presents a survey of the solutions of the earlier scholars to this paradox. In each case he first analyzes their respective solutions, comments critically on Dashtakī's remarks on these solutions, and finally rejects their validity. Next, he presents Dashtakī's solution and rejects it extensively, adducing several arguments. Finally, he outlines his own solution of the paradox.

Dawānī explains that every statement signifies a relation (*nisba*) in reality (*amr wāqiʿ*) between subject and predicate. It is on the basis of the correctness of this relation that we evaluate the statement as true or false. The problem with the paradoxical sentence is that, on the one hand, it purports to signify a relation, as all genuine statements do, and, on the other hand, the relation between the subject and predicate is not genuine. When you say, "This statement is true/false" and you refer to the statement that you have just stated, this does not signify a real relation that obtains independently of the judgment. Therefore, it is not a statement (*khabar*), and it is not a candidate for truth or falsity (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 3, fols. 193b–198a; Dawānī *Nihāya*, 85–86).

Dawānī rejected Dashtakī's analysis of the paradoxical statement as two sequential judgments. But he argued that even if the analysis is granted, the paradoxical sentence would have a determinate value as being false and not a suspended value, as Dashtakī suggested. It is false because of the nonexistence of the subject (*bi-intifāʾ al-mawḍūʿ*). Likewise, if Zayd says nothing at all, it is false to say, "The statement by Zayd is true/false" (Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya* 3, fols. 193b–98a; Dawānī, *Nihāya*, 91–92).

As had been previously mentioned, Dashtakī apparently revised and expanded his New Gloss once more after the composition of Dawānī's Newest Gloss. It is, however, difficult at this stage to pinpoint these revisions/expansions.

19.8. Further Development of the Dispute between Dawānī and Dashtakī

Beside their respective glosses on Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd*, Dawānī and Dashtakī refuted each other's views in the following written disputes (table 19.1): (1) their superglosses on Jurjānī's gloss on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on Urmawī's *Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*, titled *Lawāmiʿ al-asrār fī sharḥ Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*, (2) their superglosses

Table 19.1 Chronological Outline of the Philosophical Disputes between Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī

	Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī	Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī
		The Old Gloss on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*
882–83/1477–78	The Old Gloss on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*	
887/1482		The New Gloss on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*
		The Old Supergloss on *Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*
	The supergloss on *Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*	
		The New Supergloss on *Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*
	Correspondence on the liar paradox	
897/1491–92	The New Gloss on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* and *Treatise on the Proof for the Existence of the Necessary Existent*	First revision/expansion of the New Gloss on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*
	The Newest Gloss on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*	
		Second revision/expansion of the New Gloss on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*
		Treatise on the liar paradox
Early 903/1497		*Treatise on the Proof for the Existence of the Necessary Existent*
903/ 1498		Death of Dashtakī
	- *The Final Word on the Sophistry of "Everything I Say Is a Lie"* - *Treatise on the Proof for the Existence of the Necessary Existent* - Commentary on Ījī's *ʿAqāʾid*	

on Jurjānī's glosses on al-Ījī's commentary on Ibn Ḥājib's *Mukhtaṣar al-muntahā* (which is not known to be extant), (3) their superglosses on Jurjānī's glosses on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on Kātibī's *Shamsiyya*, and (4) their treatises on the proof of the existence of the Necessary Existent and His attributes (Pourjavady 2011, 75).

Dashtakī also responded to Dawānī's discussion on the liar paradox in a monograph on the subject. This prompted Dawānī to write a monograph too. The work is entitled *The Final Word on the Sophistry of "Everything I Say Is a Lie"* (*Nihāyat al-kalām fī ḥall shubhat "kulli kalāmī kādhib"*) and completed after Dashtakī's death. In this work, as well as some other works he wrote after Dashtakī's death, including his *New Treatise on Proofs of the Necessary Existent* (*Risālat Ithbāt al-wājib al-jadida*) and his commentary on Ījī's *ʿAqāʾid*, he continued to respond to Dashtakī's arguments. However, he no longer polemicized against Dashtakī, as he had done when the latter was alive. Instead he criticized Dashtakī's view indirectly, sometimes not even ascribing it to a specific person.

19.9. The Reception of Dawānī's Glosses on the *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*

By the time Dawānī wrote his third gloss on the *Tajrīd*, not only Dashtakī but also some of his students, to whom Dawānī refers as "savage partisans" (*hamaj al-shuʿūbīya*), were criticizing his positions in his Old and New glosses on the *Tajrīd* (see section 19.7). The only student of Dashtakī who can safely be assumed to have been among those to whom Dawānī is referring is Ṣadr al-Dīn's son, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr al-Dashtakī. In the controversies between his father and Dawānī on the glosses on the commentary on the *Tajrīd*, Ghiyāth al-Dīn had suggested to his father some criticisms of Dawānī's positions. Dashtakī had accepted these and incorporated them into his glosses on the *Tajrīd*. After his father's death and while Dawānī was still alive, Ghiyāth al-Dīn completed his own gloss on Qūshjī's *Sharḥ*, in which he justified the positions of his father against those of Dawānī. Into this *ḥāshiya*, Ghiyāth al-Dīn incorporated a treatise on the liar paradox. Evidently his intention was not to suggest something new—his position on the liar paradox was no different from that of his father—but to undermine Dawānī's position, even if only by rhetorical means. In a separate treatise (*Taʿlīqāt ʿalā l-Sharḥ al-jadīd li-Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*), Ghiyāth al-Dīn supported his father's positions on body-soul and form-matter relationships against Dawānī's criticisms, based on his father's superglosses on Dawānī's Old Gloss. In this treatise, which was likewise written while Dawānī was still alive, Ghiyāth al-Dīn admits some shortcomings in his father's views on the soul (Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Kashf*, 984).

Besides Ghiyāth al-Dīn, some other younger scholars showed interest in the subjects of the disputes. One of them was Shams al-Dīn al-Khafrī (d. 942/1535–36), who had apparently studied with both these philosophers. Nevertheless, his metaphysics was distinct from both of them. Like Dawānī, he argued that existence is a concrete reality and identical to the Necessary Existent. However, adopting Ibn ʿArabī's notion of existence, he argued that this existence has an expanding nature, in the sense that He flows into the contingents and in this way creates them (Khafrī, *Ithbāt*, 152–53). Concerning the liar paradox, Khafrī criticizes Dawānī's solution in his *ʿIbrat al-fuḍalāʾ fī ḥall shubhat "kullu kalāmī kādhib"*, though he refers to him respectfully. In another treatise that he wrote on the subject years later, entitled *Ḥayrat al-fuḍalāʾ fī ḥall shubhat jadhr al-aṣamm*, he suggests five solutions to the paradox (Pourjavady 2011, 84–85). Khafrī composed a gloss on the first two chapters of Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd* in which he arbitrated between the views of Dashtakī and Dawānī (Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, 1:351). He also wrote a gloss on chapter 3 of Qūshjī's commentary, on theology proper, which became popular and became the subject of several superglosses.

As one of the most celebrated students of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, Najm al-Dīn al-Nayrīzī (d. after 933/1526) was actively involved in the disputes with Dawānī. While his teacher was still alive, Nayrīzī wrote his *Ḥāshiya ʿalā Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, in which he elaborated on the view of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī in response to Dawānī's criticisms. At about the same time Nayrīzī wrote a commentary on Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* (completed in 904/1498) in which he criticized Dawānī's view on the existence of the Necessary Existent. But unlike Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Nayrīzī respectfully refers to Dawānī as "the seeker of the truth" (*al-muḥaqqiq*). Nayrīzī continued commenting on the issues that had been a matter of dispute between Dashtakī and Dawānī even after the latter's death. Throughout the first two chapters of his commentary on the *Tajrīd*, Nayrīzī mainly deals with the disagreements between the two in their respective glosses on Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd*. Nayrīzī's positions as a rule are close to those of Dashtakī. He criticizes Dawānī for using *wujūd* exclusively for God. *Wujūd*, according to Nayrīzī, has two different meanings: the first meaning, which is in its infinite sense, is a second intelligible. But the second meaning is *mawjūd*, which is applicable to the Necessary Existent and contingents equally (Pourjavady 2011, 85, 99–100, 110). Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ilāhī al-Ardabīlī also criticized Dawānī's positions in his gloss on Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd* (Ḥāʾirī 1966, 5/140–42). Ardabīlī was for a while a student of Dawānī's and even received a certificate (*ijāza*) from him, but later he was taught by Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, and it appears that the latter had a more significant role in forming his philosophical thought (Pourjavady 2011, 37–44).

At the same time, some students of Dawānī supported the view of their teacher. As mentioned before, Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn al-Lārī wrote a supportive supergloss on his teacher's work. Two other students of Dawānī's, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Astarābādī and Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Shīrāzī, did the same (Ṣadrāyī Khūyī 1382sh/2003, 68, 75–76). The latter Jamāl al-Dīn, in his supergloss, seems to have subscribed to Dawānī's distinction between the existence of God and that of the contingents. He refers to Dawānī as "the master" (*al-ustādh*). Nevertheless, he shows his respect toward Dashtakī too and tries to explain the disagreement between the two by referring to two different philosophical outlooks (Shīrāzī, *Ḥāshiya*, fol. 6b). Together with two of his students, namely Ḥabīb Allāh al-Bāghnawī, known as Mīrzā-Jān (d. 995/1587), and Shihāb al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh al-Shāhābādī al-Yazdī (d. 981/1573), Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd was the main promoter of Dawānī's glosses on the *Tajrīd* throughout the tenth/sixteenth century (Astarābādī, *Dānishnāma*, fol. 24a). Dawānī's and Dashtakī's glosses remained the subject of study even in the seventeenth century. Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī (d. 1036/1641) dealt with Dawānī's and Dashtakī's respective glosses extensively in his writings (Gleave 2007, 118–39). In his own commentary on the *Tajrid* (titled *Shawāriq al-ilhām*), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Lāhījī (d. 1072/1661–62) draws upon Dawānī's and Dashtakī's glosses and sometimes cites the whole controversy on a particular matter (Izutsu 1974, 1–25).

Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) stands on the side of Dashtakī when he argues that *wujūd* is purely conceptual and that the concrete reality consists of existents (*mawjūdāt*) and not existence (*wujūd*). Nevertheless, like Dawānī he believes that when we predicate existence of the contingents (as when we say humans exist), we just affirm the reality of the quiddity. Likewise, Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045/1635) seems to have studied the debates between Dawānī and Dashtakī very closely. Some of his positions, including even those assumed to be his innovations, are actually identical with a more developed version of the views of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī. It was, for instance, in line with the latter that Mullā Ṣadrā argues for the "primacy of existence" (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), which means existence has primacy over quiddity in creation. Like Dashtakī, Mullā Ṣadrā denies quiddity for the Necessary Existent. Nevertheless, Mullā Ṣadrā sometimes agrees with Dawānī, referring to the concrete reality as *wujūd* and not *mawjūd*. However, in his metaphysics there is no clear distinction between the existence of the contingents and that of the Necessary Existent.

The glosses of Dawānī and the subjects of his disputes with Dashtakī were brought to the attention of the Indian scholars by migrant Shiraz-trained scholars. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Khʷājagī, known as al-Shaykh al-Shīrāzī (fl. 953/1546), was one of the first to introduce Dawānī's thought to India. He was followed by other Iranian migrant scholars toward the end of the sixteenth century. Bio-bibliographical works credit two Iranian scholars as the main sources for the transmission of scholastic theology into the Indian subcontinent: Mīrzā-Jān Ḥabīb Allāh al-Bāghnawī and Fatḥ Allāh al-Shīrāzī (d. 1019/1610). Having both come from Shiraz, these two scholars inspired interest in the disputes between Dawānī and Dashtakī. Whereas Bāghnawī was closer to the views of Dawānī, Fatḥ Allāh al-Shīrāzī favored the ideas of Dashtakī. Both these scholars wrote glosses on Dawānī's Old Gloss. But Sunnī scholars of the Indian subcontinent and central Asia widely regarded *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* as a suspicious Shīʿī text (Ahmed and Pourjavady, p. 612). Therefore, metaphysical teachings in the Sunnī circles shifted from Dawānī's and Dashtakī's glosses on the *Tajrīd* to Dawānī's commentary on Ījī's *ʿAqāʾid*. Bāghnawī moved to Bukhārā late in his life and taught theology there. One of his students in Bukhārā, Yūsuf Muḥammad Jān al-Kawsaj al-Qarabāghī (d. 1035/1625–26), wrote a gloss on Dawānī's commentary on Ījī's *ʿAqāʾid*. This intellectual legacy is significant because the teachings of Bāghnawī and Qarabāghī were transmitted to India shortly afterward (Ahmed and Pourjavady, pp. 612–13).

Dawānī's teachings were also known in the Ottoman lands, where scholars seem to have known his philosophical contributions from a very early period. Kemālpāşāzāde Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn Efendi (d. 940/1533) commented upon the positions of Dawānī and Dashtakī in his works on this subject, such as his treatise on existence (*Risāla fī l-wujūd*), his treatise on mental existence (*Risāla fī bayān al-wujūd al-dhihnī*), and another treatise by him on the meaning of the act of creation (*al-jaʿl*) and proof for the createdness of the quiddity (*Risāla fī bayān maʿnā l-jaʿl wa-taḥqīq anna nafs al-māhīya majʿūlatun*). A younger contemporary of Kemālpāşāzāde, Ṭāşköprüzāde Aḥmad Efendi (d. 968/1561), also dealt with the metaphysical positions of the two Shīrāzi scholars in his philosophical works. This can be traced, for instance, in the latter's treatise on divisions of the causes (*al-Nahal wa-l-ʿalal fī taḥqīq aqsām al-ʿilal*), his treatise on mental existence (*al-Shuhūd al-ʿaynī fī l-wujūd al-dhihnī*), and his supergloss on Jurjānī's gloss on Iṣfahānī's commentary on *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* (Pourjavady 2014; Lārī, *Mirʿāt*; Ṣadrāyī Khūyī 1382sh/2003, 51–52). Dawānī's commentaries on Taftāzānī's *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq and* Ījī's *ʿAqāʾid* were heavily glossed by later Ottoman scholars (see Wisnovsky 2004, 166–67, 183–84).

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CHAPTER 20

MĪR DĀMĀD'S (D. 1631) *AL-QABASĀT*

The Problem of the Eternity of the Cosmos

SAJJAD RIZVI

IF ever there was a philosopher in the postclassical period obsessed with a single problem, it was Mīr Dāmād and the problem of the incipience of the cosmos (*ḥudūth al-ʿālam*), to which he posed his solution known as perpetual creation (*ḥudūth dahrī*).

A number of people have written about Mīr Dāmād and his concept of perpetual creation. Bihbahānī, who was involved in the edition of *al-Qabasāt*, was one of the first to write a serious intellectual biography, including an extensive discussion of his works and their manuscript traditions; analysis of ideas takes up less space, but he did identify the importance of the connection of perpetual creation to Platonic notions of time and creation as well as discern the implications that his theory had for God's knowledge, determinism, and the possibility of human free will, on which most have followed him (Bihbahānī 1998). Khāminihī is primarily concerned with presenting the background to the study of Mullā Ṣadrā, his famous student (Khāminihī 2005). In the English preface to the edition of *al-Qabasāt*, Toshihiko Izutsu examined the contours of his thought, focusing upon what he called "metatemporal contingency" and the "primary reality of quiddity" (*aṣālat al-māhīya*) (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 1–15). Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī in his introduction to Mīr Dāmād in his *Muntakhabātī az āthār-i ḥukamāʾ-yi ilāhī-yi Īrān* has a long and rather unfocused introduction, including a discussion of the concept of perpetual creation, which he rejects (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, vol. 1). But perhaps because it was so unsatisfactory, Rahman wrote a short article on it—and he says that he was impelled by the inadequacy of most accounts available to him; his account demonstrates the continuities with Avicenna and how perpetual creation in effect is a sophisticated modification of Avicenna's views of the incipience of the cosmos, albeit tweaked by an interest in Proclus and in Suhrawardī (Rahman 1980). Netton also suggests that Mīr Dāmād was influenced by Suhrawardī but does not present much by way of evidence directly from the text; he glosses the ontological states but does not analyze the theory of perpetual creation (Netton 1999).

Editor of many of Mīr Dāmād's texts, ʿAlī Awjabī has a short intellectual biography that focuses on life and works; little space is devoted to ideas, although he devotes more space to the formation of a new philosophical school known as the "Yemeni philosophy" (*al-ḥikma al-yamāniyya*) (Awjabī 2003 and 2010). In two articles, I have drawn attention to the reason why time and creation are important to an understanding of God's creative agency, and attempted to make sense of the legacy of Mīr Dāmād's ideas (Rizvi 2006 and 2011). Jahānbakhsh's recent monograph adds little to what we already learned from the previous biographies, but it is on the whole a far better-sourced and referenced study (Jahānbakhsh 2010). As interest in later Islamic philosophy is no longer the sole preserve of Persian works, a recent Arabic study of his ideas is an accessible work that includes one of the most detailed analysis of his concept of perpetual creation in any language (Subḥānī 2011). Given the taste for comparative philosophy in Iran, another recent work engages in a detailed comparison of Mīr Dāmād's approach to time and creation with that of Mullā Ṣadrā and considers why the latter was more successful; this is the best and most thorough analysis in Persian (Tavakkulī 2010). However, the most adequate study in English is now the doctoral dissertation of Keven Brown, followed by his translation of *al-Qabasāt*, which locates it within its philosophical context and makes a difficult text quite accessible—it is essential that they are made available in editions that have far greater distribution than at present (Brown 2006; Mīr Dāmād 2009). While the style of Mīr Dāmād makes an assessment of his thought rather difficult (he soon gained a reputation for obscure thought and expression; Tunikābunī, *Qiṣaṣ*, 300–301, 429–31), those interested in him thus have plenty of aids upon which they can draw to locate him in the intellectual history of the Safavid period—that, along with the publication of most of his works in reliable editions means that it is the right time to study Mīr Dāmād and his philosophical contribution.

20.1. AN EXAMINED AND SANCTIFIED LIFE

Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Muḥammad Bāqir Astarābādī, better known as Mīr Dāmād because his father Sayyid Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad was the son-in-law of the powerful jurist at the Safavid court Shaykh ʿAlī al-Karakī (d. 940/1533), was born in 969/1561 into a family that combined the authority of Persian sayyids of Astarābād who, as Shīʿī scholars, from the beginning of the empire were closely involved at the Safavid court and the scholarly credentials of the *ʿulamāʾ* of Jabal ʿĀmil (Iskandar Bēg, *Tārīkh*, I, 146–47; Balyānī, *Tadhkira*, I, 591–96; al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal*, II, 249–50; Shīrāzī 1894, 485–87; Afandī, *Riyāḍ*, V, 40–44; Khʷānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, II, 234; Corbin 1981, 17–49; Jaʿfarīyān 2009, 1, 165–212; Abisaab 2004, 71–79).[1] Just as his father had played a prominent role at court under the early Safavids, he also enjoyed patronage under the successors to Shah

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[1] There is some difference of opinion on his birthdate, with a range from 958/1551 to 963/1556 also mentioned (Tavakkuli 2010, 48).

Tahmasb and studied with leading figures prominent at court in Mashhad, Qazvin, and Isfahan, including his maternal uncle Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿĀlī b. ʿAlī al-Karakī (d. 993/1585) and Shaykh Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī (d. 984/1576), father of his friend Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad (Majlisī, *Biḥār*, CVI, 84–87). Since this latter gave him an *ijāza* dated Rajab 983/1575 that mentions his father as being dead and mentions him as being very young but precocious, we can deduce that Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad died while Mīr Dāmād was quite young (an upper limit of fourteen years old, assuming the birthdate given is reliable). Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿĀlī's *ijāza* also comments on his youth and authorizes him to teach and convey what he has learned transmitted from his grandfather.

Critically in philosophy he was a student of his Astarābādī compatriot Mīr Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad Sammākī (d. 984/1576), a prominent companion of Shah Tahmasb and himself a student of Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī and hence linking him to the Shirazi philosophers who promoted a Shīʿī Avicennism in the early Safavid period (Iskandar Bēg, *Tārīkh*, I, 146; al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī *Amal*, I, 110, 192; Afandī, *Riyāḍ*, III, 330; Jaʿfariyyān 2009, I, 193–94; Bihbahānī 1998, 49; Jahānbakhsh 2010, 39–42). With Sammākī, he studied the texts of the Avicennan tradition including *al-Shifāʾ* (*The Cure*) and *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (*Pointers and Reminders*) as well as *Hidāyat al-Ḥikma* (*Guidance in Philosophy*) of al-Abharī (d. 663/1265, Sammākī has a gloss on Maybudī's commentary)—although probably for not long given the death date normally given for Sammākī. His contemporary Mīr Taqī al-Dīn Kāshānī writing in 993/1585 was already praising him as one of the great scholars of his time (Kāshānī, *Khulāṣa*, 247). He became famed as a polymath: jurist, theologian, philosopher, occultist, tradent, scientist, and even poet with the pen name *Ishrāq*. Because of his mastery, he seems to have been called the Third Teacher (*thālith al-muʿallimīn*) after Aristotle as the first and Fārābī as the second already in the Safavid period (Balyānī, I, 591; Jahānbakhsh 2010, 22–24). His student Mullā Ṣadrā praised him as "the teacher of all men, the eleventh intellect" (*ustādh al-bashar wa-l-ʿaql al-ḥādī ʿashar*) (Rizvi 2007, 12–13). Even magical powers are attributed to him—as the Ottomans besieged Hamadan in 1630, Shah Ṣafī came to him for help, and he provided a spell that defeated the besiegers (Jahānbakhsh 2010, 125). Stories of his sanctity and practice of spiritual exercises also abound (Jahānbakhsh 2010, 126–29). What fundamentally emerges is a picture of philosophy that is far more than just the intellectual pursuit of an Aristotelian framework; more evidence that the practice of philosophy and theology was never too far removed from occult science and spirituality in this period. In fact, some of his works, such as *Jadhavāt* and *Nibrās al-ḍiyāʾ*, demonstrate his interest in lettrist occultism and the influence of a "lettrist" Avicenna mediated by the *Risāla Nayrūziyya* and Ibn Turka (d. 835/1432) (cf. Lory 1996; Jahānbakhsh 2010, 147–51; Jaʿfarīyān 2009, I, 206–9).

A close companion to Shah ʿAbbās I—the various biographical sources mention a number of anecdotes about their close relations (e.g., Jahānbakhsh 2010, 83–98)—he was famous in his lifetime. The court chronicler Iskandar Bēg writing in 1025/1616 stated: "Today he lives in the capital Isfahan, and I hope that his most gracious being will continue to adorn the garden of time for years to come, allowing seekers of knowledge to be graced by the illuminating rays of his solar mind" (Iskandar Bēg, *Tārīkh*, I, 147). He taught philosophy at the Madrasa-yi Shaykh Luṭf Allāh in Isfahan (Awjabī 2006a, 102). At the death of his friend Shaykh Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī in 1030/1621, he became the Shaykh al-Islām of the capital Isfahan, a post he kept until his own death (Jahānbakhsh 2010, 81–82; Ṣifatgul 2002, 150, 186). In 1629, he conducted the coronation of Shah ʿAbbās's successor, his grandson Ṣafī. While accompanying the latter on pilgrimage to the Shīʿī shrine cities in Iraq, and having issued his will in Shaʿbān 1040 / March 1631, he died there and was buried supposedly in the courtyard of the shrine in Najaf.

Mīr Dāmād had a number of significant students both in the transmission of *ḥadīth* and in philosophical training. The former category, often attested by *ijāza*s found in Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār*, includes Sayyid Ḥusayn b. Ḥaydar al-Karakī (fl. 1029/1620) (Majlisī, *Biḥār*, CVII, 3–5), Mullā Khalīl Qazvīnī (d. 1089/1678), commentator on the classical Shīʿī *ḥadīth* compendium *al-Kāfi* in Persian and Arabic, and Mīr Lawḥī Sabzavārī (d. 1087/1676), later famed for his opposition to Sufism as evidenced in works such as *Kifāyat al-muhtadī* (Jaʿfarīyān 2009, I, 788–97, 801–2; Abisaab 2004, 113–14). In the latter category one finds Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1045/1636), preeminent thinker of the Safavid period who rejected both the metaphysics of his teacher as well as his theory of perpetual creation; nevertheless their mutual affection was clear as evidenced by the fact that Mīr Dāmād named his son Ṣadrā (Rizvi 2007); Sayyid ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. Rafīʿ al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, known as Khalīfa Sulṭān or Sulṭān al-ʿulamāʾ (d. 1064/1654), son-in-law of Shah ʿAbbās I and powerful vizier of his two successors (Afandī, *Riyāḍ*, II, 51–55; Ṣifatgul 2002, 194–202; Abisaab 2004, 99–103); Muḥammad Taqī Astarābādī (d. 1058/1648), commentator on the *Fuṣūṣ fī-l-ḥikma* attributed to Fārābī (Astarābādī, *Sharḥ*; al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal*, II, 252); Mīrzā Muḥammad Rafīʿā Nāʾinī Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1082/1671), a prolific philosophical commentator and author of the Persian *Shajara-yi ilāhiyya* (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Ḥikmat*; Ṣifatgul 2001, 275); ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhījī (d. 1072/1662), son-in-law of Mullā Ṣadrā and an Avicennan in the period (Ṣiftagul 2001, 277; Corbin 1981, 96–115); Mīr Manṣūr Gīlānī (Awjabī 2003, 180); ʿAbd al-Ghaffār Gīlānī, who wrote a commentary on *al-Īqāẓāt* (Awjabī 2003, 170; Bihbahānī 1998, 54); and Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī (d. 1080/1670), a thinker who was more apophatic in his approach to metaphysics (Corbin 1981, 83–95). Apart from Mullā Ṣadrā, most of these students accepted Mīr Dāmād's form of Avicennan metaphysical essentialism that was later termed *aṣālat al-māhiyya*.[2] But also in the form of his students, we see the whole range of philosophical tendencies in the later Safavid period, from the more mystical to the Avicennan, from the Illuminationist to the Sadrian to the attempt to recover Mīr Dāmād's school.

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[2] The question of where Mīr Dāmād himself stood on the issue of the ontological priority of existence or essence is not so straightforward. Broadly it is stated—and following his student Mullā Ṣadrā, who accused him of it—that he upheld metaphysical essentialism for the cosmos, as he considered existence to be a concept that was merely posited in the mind to represent the reality of things and essence that are and that he considered the product of creation (*al-jaʿl*) to be essences that come to be in the cosmos (Mullā Ṣadrā, *Shawāhid*, 96; Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 72; Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 79). However, he does not shy away from affirming existence for God as primary, nor does he deny that existence *per se* of an object is identical to its very actuality (i.e., more than a concept in the mind such as a secondary intelligible) (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 49–51).

In particular for the transmission of his ideas and glosses on his works, the most important figures were Sayyid Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad ʿAlawī ʿĀmilī (d. before 1060/1651), his cousin (*khāla-zād*) and son-in-law (Corbin 1981, 168–79); Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ashkivarī, known as Sharīf-i Lāhījī (d. 1090/1679), author of the influential history of philosophy *Maḥbūb al-qulūb*; Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Gīlānī (d. after 1071/1660), a major figure in the transmission of science to the Deccan who also continued Mīr Dāmād's position on creation in his own treatise *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* (Gīlānī *Rasāʾil*, 13–50); and Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Gīlānī (d. before 1064/1654), known as Mullā Shamsā (Awjabī 2006a; Corbin 1981, 120–53). It was these students who perpetuated his "Yemeni philosophy" (*al-ḥikma al-yamāniyya*). Despite the insistence of Corbin and others, the actual influence of Suhrawardī on his work is marginal compared to the Avicennan substrate that allows us to make sense of his ideas (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 1:15–30; Corbin 1956). His Yemeni philosophy is neither simply Illuminationism following Suhrawardī nor an unmodified Peripatetic Avicennism. We know that he studied Avicennan texts (including the *kalām* reception tradition of them) and probably taught them, and like many in his time was enamored of the *Theologia Aristotelis* that he cites copiously in his work, as well as possibly teaching works like the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikma* attributed to al-Fārābī that became popular in the Safavid period and on which he wrote a gloss.

Fundamentally, for Mīr Dāmād, philosophy was a prophetic inheritance. His concern was with *ḥikma ilāhiyya* in the sense of a philosophy that brings one closer to God and to becoming divine on the model of the *theosis* sought in late antiquity (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt* I, 2). The central pursuit involved the study of metaphysics (*ḥikmat mā fawq al-ṭabīʿa*) (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt* I, 3; Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 483). His method involved a presentation of philosophy that existed before him primarily from the school of Avicenna, which he labels "Greek philosophy" (*ḥikma yunāniyya),* and then a critical exposition of the position, replacing it with his improved argument, which he described as "Yemeni," based on the famous saying attributed to the Prophet: "Faith is Yemeni and wisdom is Yemeni" (*al-īmān yamānī wa-l-ḥikma yamāniyya*), as reported in practically all the canonical *ḥadīth* collections (al-Kulaynī, VIII, 70; Ibn Ḥanbal, II, 277, 457). This prophetic inheritance as philosophy is indicated in the gloss by Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831) on *Nibrās al-ḍiyāʾ* (*Lamp of Illumination*) where he equates Yemeni philosophy with "Muḥammadan wisdom" because it was what is received from the "Breath of the Merciful" or the "Muḥammadan reality," although this may signal Nūrī's stronger adherence to the school of Ibn ʿArabī than to the master himself (Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 72). He considered all previous schools of thought (Peripatetic and Illuminationist philosophy, Ashʿarī theology, and even Twelver Shīʿī theology) to be incomplete and unreliable in their understanding of reality. His Yemeni position is not a purely ratiocinative one, and it extends knowledge and understanding beyond the confines of discourse (*baḥth*) and reason to the nonpropositional, intuitive (*dhawq*), immediate, and mystically disclosed (*kashf*). As his primary concern is with the philosophy of theistic creation, his Yemeni philosophy is deployed to solve the problems of time and creation.

In *Jadhavāt va mawāqīt* (*Flaming Embers and Epiphanies*), a thoughtful contemplation written in Persian (his only major work in that language) of Moses's encounter with the theophany of the burning bush on Mount Sinai, he describes different conceptions and level of creation:

> Causation—which is a term for emanation, "making," and bringing into existence—in the doctrine of "those rooted in knowledge" (*rāsikhīn-i ʿulamāʾ)* and of the metaphysicians of Greek and of Yemeni philosophy is of four types: *ibdāʿ* [origination, *creatio ex nihilo*], *ikhtirāʿ* [production], *ṣunʿ* [fashioning or creation in the higher intelligible world], and *takwīn* [generation or creation in the sublunar world]. (Mīr Dāmād, *Jadhavāt*, 99)

Later in the same text, he analyzes the Yemeni philosophical understanding of numerical order and the existence of Platonic numbers as first-order emanations from the One, an important element of the argument concerning levels of creation from the One (Mīr Dāmād, *Jadhavāt*, 170). In one of his most important works on philosophical theology, *al-Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (*The Straight Path*)—primarily concerned with the problem of creation and, like many others, left unfinished—Mīr Dāmād sets out what he intends to accomplish with the work:

> The one most desirous among creation for his Lord the Self-Sufficient, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad known as Bāqir Dāmād al-Ḥusaynī—may God make his afterlife good—presents to you, brothers of self-purification (*ikhwān al-tajrīd*), and expounds for you, brothers of retreat and solitude, a solution to the confusion caused in you by the multitude of teachers attempting to reveal the difficult relationship between the Eternal and the incipient, and [aims] to ease its difficulties with clear thought according to the method of Greek philosophy and of Yemeni philosophy, and to investigate the discourse of those expounders and make them wither with firm writing and forthright exposition. (Mīr Dāmād, *Ṣirāṭ*, 3)

He clearly thought that those who had written before him on the issue of creation and time, including Avicenna, had failed to convince, and he felt that he could produce a more robust argument and pin his Yemeni philosophy on the central doctrine of perpetual creation. Later in the text, before he embarks on the main discussion of the doctrine, he distinguishes three types of prior nonexistence based on Yemeni philosophy:

> According to what we have acquired from the mature Yemeni philosophy ripened by the faculty of the intellect, obtained through demonstrative syllogisms and divine inspirations, it appears that incipience has three possible meanings: The first of them is the priority of the existence of a thing by essential nonexistence, and this is called, according to the philosophers, "essential creation" (*ḥudūth dhātī*. . . . The second of them is the priority of a thing by its nonexistence in perpetuity and eternity that is atemporal such that the thing is nonexistent in a real sense through pure nonexistence that is not qualified by continuity and its opposite. It then moves from this pure nonexistence to existence and would appear to be most appropriately termed

> [incipience], that is, perpetual creation (*ḥudūth dahrī*). The third of them is the priority of the existence of the thing by its nonexistence in time so that its existence is preceded by an element of time, and this is called by the theologians "temporal creation" (*ḥudūth zamānī*). (Mīr Dāmād, *Ṣirāṭ*, 195)

The very notion of perpetual creation is directly related to his school of Yemeni philosophy. In *al-Ufuq al-mubīn* (*The Clear Horizon*), the text that was so popular in India, he begins by saying that the work on the nature of the metaphysics of theistic creation is the result of what came to him from "matured Yemeni philosophy and the pure, ecstatic philosophy of faith" (Mīr Dāmād, *Ufuq*, 5). In this text, he makes it clear that true philosophy arises from an act of divine grace—a bounty—and God has expanded his heart to understand reality and chosen him from among the people of the Islamic community worthy of it so that he is capable of explaining truth through demonstration (*al-ḥaqq bi-l-burhān*), and capable of dispelling confusion and lack of clarity through the mercy of God (Mīr Dāmād, *Ufuq*, 4). Elsewhere in the same text he argues that the twin pillars of the Yemeni philosophy are the tripartite levels of temporality as well as metaphysical essentialism, the notion that it is essences that are the result of God's creative agency in the cosmos (*majʿūliyyat al-māhiyya*) (Mīr Dāmād, *Ufuq*, 536–37).

At the beginning of *al-Taqdīsāt*, Mīr Dāmād describes *ḥikma* as *al-ḥikma al-īmānīya al-yamāniyya al-baḥīja*, which is the same as *al-falsafa al-dīniyya al-yaqīniyya al-naḍīḥa*, and asserts that this involves the perfecting of the path of the rational faculty by preparing oneself for a second nature (*al-fiṭra al-ukhrā*; the phrase arises from the *Theologia Aristotelis*), whereby the rules of sacred philosophy (*ḥikma qudsiyya*) become certain and rooted and the axioms of the intellect internalized, and proper understanding acquired through inspirations from the hidden higher realm through acts of illumination from the divine (*faḥṣiyya fī ilhāmāt ghaybiyya malakūtiyya ʿalā aṣālīb nūriyya lāhūtiyya*) (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt* I, 114–15). He then cites a saying of Imam ʿAlī that one understands and speaks, "not through one's human nature, but through a divine faculty" (*bi-quwwatin rabbāniyyatin lā bi-fiṭratin insāniyyatin*) (Majlisī, *Biḥār*, LVIII, 47). One needs to transcend the limited human nature because understanding "things as they truly are" (*ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ kamā hiya*) is beyond the ability of creatures (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt,* I, 148). Mīr Dāmād's conception of philosophy is thus heavily influenced not only by the *Theologia*, but also by a prophetic approach to the nature of reasoning. In the beginning of *al-Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm* (*The Straight Path*), he makes it clear that philosophy is both a prophetic inheritance and a spiritual practice that culminates in the ability to doff the body and experience the beatific vision of the intellect in the presence of the One that draws upon the famous passage in the *Theologia Aristotelis* (based on Plotinus's *Enneads* IV.8.1) (Mīr Dāmād, *Ṣirāṭ*, 8–10). Even in his work on *ḥadīth* entitled *al-Rawāshiḥ al-samāwiyya*, he clarifies that philosophy requires the ability to transcend the corporeal (Mīr Dāmād, *Rawāshiḥ*, 34). Philosophy as a spiritual practice is thus consistent with a mystical vision—the introduction to the text culminates with the famous passages on the stations of the mystics in Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* that signal Mīr Dāmād's debt to the Dashtakī tradition of "mystical Avicennism" that he inherited from his teacher Sammākī (Mīr Dāmād, *Ṣirāṭ*, 11–12).

Why was Mīr Dāmād so concerned with the beginning of the cosmos? It was not just al-Ghazālī to whom he was responding, and Avicenna whom he was defending or extending. It was Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 908/1502), who in his *Anmūdhaj al-ʿulūm* (*Exemplars of the Sciences*) revived the debate on the beginning of the world and hence led to the Safavid responses (Dawānī, *Anmūdhaj*, 284–319). The totality of the section on principles of faith—the longest section of the text—is taken up with the question of the incipience of the cosmos; contrary to the philosophers' position—excepting Plato—which affirmed the eternity of the cosmos and mere logical posteriority of the cosmos to the One, he insisted that the cosmos came into existence after it was not and had to be preceded by "real nonexistence" (*ʿadamiyya ḥaqīqiyya*). Mīr Dāmād similarly insists upon this while rejecting the mere logical posteriority of the cosmos. Dawānī's argument is based on refuting eternity and arguing for the conception of temporality based on motion, which is rejected by Mīr Dāmād. The Shirazi thinker's own school continued to uphold his position, while Safavid thinkers (Maḥmūd Nayrīzī, for example) seemed to adhere broadly to Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's formulation of the temporal incipience of bodies alongside the eternity of intellects (Pourjavady 2011, 62–63, 128).[3] He wrote a gloss on the Dawānī text (albeit on a point of logic defending Avicenna) and his own *Anmūdhaj al-ʿulūm*, as did his student Sulṭān al-ʿUlamāʾ (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt*, I, 520–23; Bihbahanī 1998, 121; Awjabī 2003, 169–70, 197), that located his loyalties with the Dashtakī tradition (*al-ustādh ghawth al-ḥukamāʾ*).

Alongside this motivation to write on the beginning of the cosmos, the genre of treatises establishing the existence of a creator (*ithbāt al-bāriʾ*) increasingly considered the question of divine creative agency (in terms of the attribute of *al-qudra*) and raised the question of whence the cosmos, not least in a text written by a thinker who died just before him, Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Kāshānī (d. 966/1559), entitled *Kitāb al-Shawāriq* (Kāshānī, *Shawāriq*; Saatchian 2011). Kāshānī may have been a student of Dashtakī, and in his treatise he devotes a large section to the discussion of divine creative agency in terms of understanding how the cosmos is created by God, as well as God's will (*irādatuhu*) to create (Kāshānī, *Shawāriq*, 51–132, 197–228). His main concern is to demonstrate the notion of God's volitional agency to bring the cosmos into existence out of nothing, albeit on the basis of the Avicennan argument for God as the necessary of existence and the principle that for something to exist it must first be necessary (*mā lam yajib lam yūjad*). Not only must the cosmos be the creature of a volitional God—and he insists that a denial of such a theological proposition places one beyond the pale of Islam—but also it must be preceded by "pure nonexistence" (*ʿadam ṣirf*) (Kāshānī, *Shawāriq*, 51, 60). Kāshānī spends some time criticizing the philosophers' position on the eternal cosmos through a critique of their notion of temporality predicated on motion, which results in his own denial of the reality of time. Thus already in these texts that precede Mīr Dāmād, we see a theological concern with the question of the creation of the cosmos, with the insistence that the cosmos must have been preceded by its absolute nonexistence, and with the need to temper its eternity, which was a position normally associated with philosophers—or rather the *falāsifa* who in the Safavid period are often decried while the *ḥukamāʾ* are praised.

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[3] Just within Iran there are over fifty copies of the *Anmūdhaj al-ʿulūm*. Dawānī's line of students who wrote on this topic within a text entitled *Anmūdhaj al-ʿulūm* included Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Lārī (d. 979/1572, e.g., MS Damad Ibrahim Paşa/Suleymaniye 791, 96 ff.), Mīrzājān Bāghnawī Shīrāzī (d. 994/1586, e.g., MS Madrasa-yi Khān Marvī Tehran 800, 7 ff.), and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Shīrwānī (d. 1098/1687, e.g., MS Tehran University Central Library 7162, fols. 68v–89v). Other authors with works on the same title that criticized Dawānī's position following Dashtakī (and perhaps Mīr Dāmād) included Afḍal al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 991/1583, e.g., MS Kitābkhāna-yi Malik, Tehran 4681, fols. 42r–43r), Sulṭān al-ʿUlamāʾ (d. 1064/1654, e.g., MS Kitābkhāna-yi Marʿashī 2783, fols. 3v–33v), Muʿizz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Fakhr al-Dīn Mashhadī (fl. 1096/1685, e.g., MS Kitābkhāna-yi Khān Marvī 800, 2 ff.), and Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad Bāqir Khātūnābādī (d. 1116/1704, e.g., MS Kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i Shūrā 3453). The *majmūʿa* codex MS Kitābkhāna-yi Khān Marvī 800 seems to be a particularly valuable collection of treatises entitled *Anmūdhaj al-ʿulūm*. See Dirāyatī 2011, II, 211–13.

Mīr Dāmād's own debt to the Avicennan tradition and its theological expressions can be seen in the fact the he wrote glosses on the major works of those traditions, including *al-Jamʿ bayna raʾyay al-ḥakīmayn*, attributed to Fārābī (a very brief comment that affirms perpetual creation and locates it within an Avicennan framework), *al-Taʿlīqāt* and the *Metaphysics* of *al-Shifāʾ* of Avicenna, as well as glosses on the glosses that Shams al-Dīn Khafrī (d. 1535) penned on the commentary on Qūshjī on the theology of *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* of Ṭūsī (Bihbahānī 1998, 131; Awjabī 2004, 197, 198). He refers to al-Fārābī and Avicenna as his guides in philosophy (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 72, 77). His glosses on *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* of Suhrawardī do not reveal an Illuminationist thinker; he is critical of metempsychosis and the presentation of the afterlife in the gloss, which was completed in 1029/1620 after most of his works were written but before *al-Qabasāt* (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt*, I, 523–27). The gloss on Khafrī is concerned primarily with the problem of creation and reads like a very brief summary of his argument in *al-Qabasāt*; since he cites his *al-Īmāḍāt*, it was probably written around 1025/1616 (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt*, I, 554–60).

One can locate Mīr Dāmād's interest in the question of creation within the genre of such treatises on *ḥudūth al-ʿālam*. From the union catalog of manuscripts in Iran, one can gauge this rough chronology of works that engage with the question of the creation of the cosmos and show a shift from theological refutations of eternity toward a more nuanced acceptance of it (Dirāyatī 2011, Volume 4, 550–54):

1. *Ḥudūth al-ajsām min al-jawāhir* of al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), a *kalām* study of how bodies are created in time, a position later taken up by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī
2. *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* of Afḍal al-Dīn Ibn Ghaylān, which is highly critical of Avicenna's position on the logical posteriority of the cosmos to God and defends the theological position of creation in time (Ibn Ghaylān, *Ḥudūth*)

3. *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* of Mīr Dāmād and his school, including works by Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī (completed Dhū-l-Qaʿda 1045 / April 1636 in Mashhad, which is available in an edition by ʿAlī-Riżā Aṣgharī), Niẓām al-Dīn Gīlānī (an edition by Muhammad Karimi Zanjani Asl is forthcoming), Shaykh ʿAlī-Naqī Kāmarihī Shīrāzī (d. 1060/1649) entitled *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam al-radd ʿalā Nūḥ Afandī Ḥanafī* (d. 1070/1660) (Ṭihrānī 1983, Volume 6, 1573),[4] Ḥusayn b. Ibrāhīm Tunikābunī completed in 1049/1639 (Ṭihrānī 1983, VI, 293), and Sulṭān al-ʿulamāʾ
4. *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* of Mullā Ṣadrā (Shīrāzī, *Ḥudūth*)
5. *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* of other Avicennan scholars, including Mīr Maʿṣūm Dashtakī (d. 1032/1622), Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzavārī (d. 1090/1679), Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Khalkhālī (d. 1014/1605), Mīrzā Ḥasan Lāhījī (d. 1121/1709), and Mullā Naʿīmā Ṭāliqānī (d. 1152/1739)[5]

What this quick survey of texts on this genre suggests is that Mīr Dāmād drew upon a growing interest for philosophy to engage with theological arguments but also that his own foray into this area sparks further interest and responses. The text, of course, that began it all was his last major work, *al-Qabasāt*.

The question of creation was consistently discussed in his works: probably first in *Khulsat al-malakūt* in 1021/1611, then in *al-Iʿḍālāt al-ʿawīṣa* in 1022/1613; 1025/1616 was a popular year for a number of his incomplete works on this topic, including *al-Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm fī rabṭ al-ḥādith wa-l-qadīm, al-Ufuq al-mubīn, al-Īmāḍāt*, and *al-Īqāẓāt fī khalq al-aʿmāl; Taqwīm al-īmān*, his complete theological summa that discusses creation, followed in 1026/1617; and 1034/1625 was also a significant year with *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* and *al-Qabasāt* later on; finally *Nibrās al-ḍiyāʾ* followed in the year after. It is rare perhaps—but certainly the case with Mīr Dāmād—for an author to be so fixated on the same issue as to write a number of versions of the different argument, many of which seem to have been responses to his students and remain incomplete.

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[4] Kāmarihī was an influential jurist associated with both Mīr Dāmād (from whom he had an *ijāza*) and Mullā Ṣadrā, and Shaykh al-Islām of Shiraz under Shah Ṣafī and later of Isfahan under Shah ʿAbbās II for the last five years of his life (Jaʿfariyyān 2009, I, 501–24). He may have been influenced by Mīr Dāmād, since a work entitled *al-Maqāṣid al-ʿāliya fī-l-ḥikma al-yamāniyya* is attributed to him—and his treatise on *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* may be a summary of it, of which a manuscript copy is MS Kitābkhāna-yi Āyatullāh Marʿashī 4256 (cf. Afandī, *Riyāḍ*, II, 272).

[5] Mīr Maʿṣūm was a scion of the Dashtakī family of Shiraz, son of a major philosopher, Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 1015/1606), and theologically defended the position of a cosmos created in time; he taught in Mecca. Sabzavārī also comments in a series of glosses on the Avicennan corpus on matters relating to creation and time (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 2:543–56). Sayyid Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Khalkhālī was one of the émigrés to the Ottoman court who fled the Shīʿī Safavid empire and who was in the line of the students of Davānī; see MS Marʿashī 6169, fols. 168r–178v for an example of this text. It is not clear whether the work of Mīrzā Ḥasan Lāhījī is an independent treatise or a section of either his *Zawāhir al-ḥikma* (extant in Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, vol. 3) or *Āyīna-yi ḥikmat* (Lāhījī 1996, 103–7). He upholds the creation of the cosmos ex nihilo in time and asserts its identity with the true doctrine of the divine philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ-yi ilāhī*).

20.2. *Al-Qabasāt*

Al-Qabasāt or *Qabasāt ḥaqq al-yaqīn fī ḥudūth al-ʿālam* was completed in Shaʿbān 1034 / May 1625 and reflects his mature and perhaps final doctrine late in life and at the end of the reign of Shah ʿAbbās. It seeks to establish a middle path based on the method of Avicennism between the postulation of a cosmos that is eternal and a cosmos that is created in time, based on the notion of perpetual creation in which the cosmos is preceded by real nonexistence. The text itself is divided into ten *qabas*—burning embers, each of which is divided into a *wamḍa* (flash, pl. *wamḍāt*) and *wamīḍ* (blaze, pl. *wamīḍāt*). The very term *qabas* suggests Mīr Dāmād's fascination with the theophany on Mount Sinai (also seen in Mīr Dāmād 2001) and alludes to Qurʾān 27.7: "Behold when Moses said to his people: I perceive a light; soon I shall bring you some information from there or bring a burning brand (*shihābin qabasin*) so that you may warm yourselves." In the preface to the text—one of the few in philosophical theology that he actually completed—he noted that some friends had asked him to provide a reasoned proof for how God is solely and uniquely in His eternity and yet manages to act and produce an entire cosmos that has some sort of beginning (*ḥudūth*) (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 1). Ultimately he is interested in whether the cosmos—everything apart from God—has a beginning or does not (*ḥādith am azalī*), and to demonstrate that beginning is with the creator, hence ensuring divine creative agency (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 2).

The first six *qabas* establish his theory of perpetual creation (*ḥudūth dahrī*) beginning with his definition of creation (*ḥudūth*) and the three "receptacles" of existence in the first *qabas*, followed by eight arguments, including deploying scriptural evidence in *qabas* IV. *Qabas* VII involves the examination and refutation of those who hold that the cosmos has no beginning in time in an unqualified manner (*ḥudūth dhātī*). *Qabas* VIII moves onto the related issue of God's creative agency (*qudra*) and will (*irāda*). *Qabas* IX analyzes the chain of being and how God's creative agency works through from the eternal *intelligibilia* and how being then reverts back to God. The final *qabas* discusses the major implication of the study that relates to the problem of divine decree and destiny (*al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*) and how one makes sense of the problem of evil (*al-sharr*).

The argument for perpetual creation is based on eight philosophical principles summarized thus by his student Sayyid Aḥmad al-ʿAlawī in his commentary:

> We have investigated the eight principles that are the principles for the demonstrations of the creation of the world in this book. The first is the knowledge of the receptacles of existence (*awʿiyat al-wujūd*), namely, temporality, perpetuity, and eternity. The second is the knowledge that existence is identical to the essentially Necessary Being but accidental to contingent essences. The third is the knowledge of the three kinds of essential priority and their characteristics. The fourth is the knowledge of the two kinds of separate priority (*al-qabliyya al-infikākiyya*), the eternal and the temporal, and their characteristics. The fifth is the knowledge of the three kinds of creation (*al-ḥudūth*) and their requirements. The sixth is the knowledge of quantitative

> relation (*al-nisba al-mutaqaddara*) and everlasting relation (*al-nisba al-abadiyya*) and the distinction between them. The seventh is the knowledge of the mode of existence of the unqualified natures and the investigation of them. The eighth is the knowledge of the continuity of motion and temporality and what is associated with that. (al-ʿAlawī, *Sharḥ*, 395)

What is clear from this list is that this is very much an Avicennan formulation and draws upon Avicenna's own distinction, as we shall see, between two types of nontemporal creation—one that is preceded by matter and hence qualified nonexistence, and the other that is not preceded by matter and hence by absolute nonexistence. Mīr Dāmād sets out the following, rather processual, definition of orders of temporality before citing his examples from the Peripatetic tradition:

> In *de re* existence (*al-ḥuṣūl fī nafs al-amr*), there are three types of ontological receptacle (*waʿiyya*). The receptacle of an extended existence in flux (*al-wujūd al-mutaqaddar al-sayyāl*) and a continuous extended nonexistence that belongs to mutable entities insofar as they are mutable in time (*zamān*). The receptacle of a pure existence (*ṣarīḥ al-wujūd*) that is preceded by a pure nonexistence, and that transcends the horizon of extension and nonextension and belongs to immutables insofar as they are immutable while embracing actuality, is perpetuity (*dahr*). The receptacle of a pure Real Immutable Sanctified Existence (*baḥt al-wujūd al-thābit al-ḥaqq*) absolutely devoid of the accidentality of change and transcendent above any sense of being preceded by nonexistence, and who is pure and sheer activity (energeia, *fiʿliyya*) is eternity (*sarmad*). Just as perpetuity transcends and is more vast than time, so too is eternity higher, more majestic, more holy, and greater than perpetuity (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 7; cf. Brown 2006, 70)

There are five key points in this passage. First, note the processual nature of entities at each of these levels and the processual nature of the order of temporality that corresponds to it. We are not here faced with an Avicennan substance metaphysics. Even God is a process insofar as He is pure activity. Second, note that both existents and nonexistents are considered within the category of time that raises interesting issues of tenses and future possibility within this world. Third, the level of perpetuity is the crucial ground for the relationship between God, the immutable, and the world, the mutable (generative and corruptible in the standard Aristotelian terminology). Fourth, time is an aspect of existential consciousness. This raises the possibility of the psychic provenance of time, which would suggest continuity with the late Neoplatonic tradition. Fifth, the temporality of perpetuity (*dahr*) seems to follow Proclus's (and other Neoplatonists') notion of "temporal perpetuity" in proposition 55 of the *Stoikeosis Theologike* (Proclus, *Elements*, 28–30).

He then draws upon a number of proof texts for his tripartite division of temporality, beginning with passages from Avicenna (cf. Brown 2006, 81–89). First, Mīr Dāmād cites the passage below from *al-Taʿlīqāt* that comprises a series of notes addressing questions brought to Avicenna's attention by his students concerning issues in his major works.

Thus the discrete paragraphs of the *Glosses* are often more explicit and clear than the relevant passages on time in the *al-Shifāʾ* or in *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*. This passage describes the intellect's ability to grasp three orders of temporality relating to three types of entities. This is significant: temporality devoid of an ontology of things would be quite absurd for Avicenna and is so for Mīr Dāmād also.

> The intellect grasps three types of entities. The first is in time and expressed by "when" and describes mutables that have a beginning and an end, although its beginning is not its end but necessitates it. It is in permanent flux and requires states and renewal of states. The second is being with time and is called perpetuity (*dahr*), and it surrounds time. It is the being of the firmament with time, and time is in that being because it issues from the motion of the firmament. It is the relationship of the immutable to the mutable, although one's imagination cannot grasp it because it sees everything in time and thinks that everything is "is," "will be," and "was," past, present, and future, and sees everything as "when" either in the past or the present or the future. The third is the being of the immutable with the immutable and is called eternity, and it surrounds perpetuity. . . . Perpetuity is conscious of time as it surrounds it. Time is a weak existence, as it is in flux and mutable. (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 7–8; Avicenna, *Taʿlīqāt*, 421–23; Michot 1986, 59–60)

The inadequacy of human intellection requires us to use notions of temporality and even tensing to explain, in temporal terms, the two notions of perpetuity and eternity, even though these notions and realities transcend time as such. Our ordinary language of time and temporality is tensed; that is an inescapable fact (cf. Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 48). Normally we consider temporality to be associated with motion—following Aristotle—but he considers temporality to be associated with an ontological state, and hence one can talk of "when" creation happened in perpetuity. The Neoplatonic taste of the passage is quite clear: what is immutable, what is simple, and what is motionless is ontologically higher and prior to what is mutable, complex, and in motion. That time is described as a "weak existence" also suggests the beginnings of a processual shift in the language of temporality and ontology as it entails the notion of intensity, of more or less, stronger and weaker, in existence, which would seem odd in a strictly substantialist notion of existing things.

He follows this up with a passage from the metaphysics of *al-Shifāʾ*:

> There is no extension in either perpetuity or eternity because measure pertains to motion. So time is as if an effect of perpetuity, and perpetuity [is] as if it were an effect of eternity. If there were no permanence of the relationship of the causes of bodies to their principles, bodies would not exist, let alone their motion, and if there were no permanence of the relationship of time to the principle of time, time would not be realized. (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 8–9; Avicenna, *Shifāʾ*, 19, 117)

Thus we have further evidence adduced to demonstrate the intimate link between ontology and temporality. But what we also see in this passage is an aspect of the circularity of Avicenna's definition of time: we can only understand eternity and perpetuity through temporality, and temporality and change only with respect to immutability and permanence. Note the recourse to figurative language to describe the relationship between temporality and atemporality precisely because the notion of a God who is beyond time is so difficult to grasp. This is also reiterated by al-ʿAlawī. What emerges is that Avicenna's own conception of atemporal creation is modified: while he might hold that intelligibles, those things in the "mind of God," so to speak, exist in eternity, Mīr Dāmād regards them as having an atemporal beginning (and creation) in perpetuity and having no end, and this level is associated with what thinkers call the mode of being known as *nafs al-amr*. Being preceded by pure nonexistence does not mean being preceded by prime matter or even the essence of the divine but merely the absence or privation of being existent or even possible. He is shifting around Avicenna's cosmology (Rahman 1980, 147).

Finally, we have two passages from Avicenna's later summa, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*. The first passage comes from *namaṭ* VII on the intellect, and the particular section relates to Ibn Sīnā's famous "denial" that God knows particulars because that would compromise God within time:

> It is necessary that the knowledge of particulars that the Necessary Being has is not temporal knowledge such that He is in time, in the present, past, and future. That would require that an attribute of His essence be that He is mutable. Rather, it is necessary that His knowledge of particulars be in a sense that is holy and transcends time and perpetuity. (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 9; Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, III, 315)

God, as a transcendent, immutable and timeless deity cannot be confined in temporality. Our knowledge of things is a function of the temporal and ontological contexts of ourselves and the objects of our knowledge (cf. Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 135). God is not confined to such a context; He is singularly in eternity, and thus His knowledge of objects cannot be the same as ours, conditioned by space and time and sensibility. Avicenna explicitly rules out the tensed notion of time. The second passage from *namaṭ* V deals with the nature of eternity and causality.

> If it is permitted for something to be similar in state in all matters and have an effect, it is not far from being necessarily eternal. (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 9)

If a cause encompasses potentially all things and there is sympathy between it and all entities beneath it in the ontological hierarchy, it is an eternal cause beyond time since, unlike its effects, it is not confined by temporality. The similarity of the state of that thing in all cases means that Avicenna is discussing immutable entities. Immutable causes are beyond time. Mīr Dāmād goes on to cite an explanation of eternity with respect to the two other modes of temporality, as explained in the commentary upon the passage by Ibn Sīnā's enthusiastic but creative champion Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274):

> He [Avicenna] uses the term "eternity" to express permanence because it is a technical term. The term "time" is applied to the relationship between mutables. The term

> "perpetuity" is applied to the relationship between immutables and mutables, and the term "eternity" is applied to the relationship between immutables. (Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, III, 119)

He completes his citation of Avicennan texts by quoting a passage, by way of summarizing the school position, from *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl* (*The Digest*) by Avicenna's student Bahmanyār (d. 1066):

> It is known that time does not exist in time such that its nonexistence is in another time. Time is one of those things that is weak in existence, such as motion and matter. Temporal things are those in which there is priority and posteriority, past and future, beginning and end, and what is motion or possesses motion. But what is extrinsic to this is what exists with time. . . .
>
> If this simultaneity exists by analogy of the permanent to the impermanent, then it is perpetuity that encompasses time. If it is in relation of the permanent with a permanent, then it is properly called eternity. . . . Both of them are opposed to being temporal in time. . . . Neither perpetuity nor eternity has extension, either in conjecture or in fact, not even a measure of motion. (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 10; Bahmanyār, *Taḥṣīl*, 462–63).

This passage strongly mirrors the initial Avicennan citation from the *Glosses* and illustrates the completion of the Avicennan "position" whose authority Mīr Dāmād wishes to invoke.

The citations from the *Theologia Aristotelis* are designed to demonstrate that perpetuity is the level of intelligible time, while the level of eternity is that of a simultaneous whole (cf. Brown 2006, 89–95). The *Theologia* thus also represents the threefold division of temporality, but also most significantly posits the possibility of a human soul's traversing these levels. In the headings of topics (*ruʾūs al-masāʾil*) provided in the introduction of the text, the author argues that every intelligible entity is timeless because intelligibles properly exist in perpetuity and not in time. It is because of this that they can be causes for time (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 11; Aflūṭīn, *Uthūlūjiyā*, 8–10). Humans are thus paradoxical composites of a body that is temporal and a soul that belongs to perpetuity (Aflūṭīn, *Uthūlūjiyā*, 11). To demonstrate the distinction between time and perpetuity, Mīr Dāmād cites *mīmar* II of the *Theologia*, in which the author argues that when the soul reverts to its origin in the higher intelligible world, as is its wont, indicated by the famous doffing metaphor of *Enneads* IV.8.1, it shows that it belongs to a world of perpetuity and not of time (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 11–12; Aflūṭīn, *Uthūlūjiyā*, 22, 29–31). The soul knows through its recollection of the immutable and timeless essences of things in that intelligible realm, and thus can be a cause for time through the process of cognition. Then he cites *mīmar* V of the *Theologia* to demonstrate the divine level of eternity (Mīr Dāmad, *Qabasāt*, 12–13; Aflūṭīn, *Uthūlūjiyā*, 68). The author discusses three levels of activity: the perfect *energeia* of the First Agent that is God, a less perfect activity of the intellects, and the transient activity of temporal agents. To each of these levels of activity corresponds a level of temporality. Finally, he cites *mīmar* VII of the *Theologia* to demonstrate the relationship of God with entities across time (Mīr Dāmad, *Qabasāt*, 13–14; Aflūṭīn, *Uthūlūjiyā*, 94–114). There is a causal chain that traverses levels of temporality depending on the level of the mutability of entities at that ontological level. What is of critical importance is that God does not create in time, but rather time comes into existence with the cosmos; the cause of time itself must transcend time.

The result of the citations of these texts is to show that there are three levels of temporality that correspond to three ontological levels of reality. Hence, there are three possible types of incipience: the first means that the cosmos has a beginning in time (*ḥudūth zamānī*), a view usually associated with theology, the second that the cosmos is preceded by absolute nonexistence, which means that it succeeds God by essence (*ḥudūth dhātī*), a view associated with Avicenna, and the third that the cosmos is preceded by a relative nonexistence, meaning that it was potential but then becomes actual, and this last is what is known as perpetual creation (*ḥudūth dahrī*). Once he has established that creation relates to these three levels of reality defined in "temporal" terms, he needs to decouple the definitions of time and motion, working against both the Aristotelian and Avicennan traditions, as he does in *qabas* VI (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 183–237; Brown 2006, 354–425). His main attempt in five arguments is to establish perpetual creation and then to disprove that time extends eternally but rather is a discrete and continuous reality; these are primarily proofs for the impossibility of an actual infinite (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 227–31). Time and motion appear at the level of the physical cosmos, and all that is temporally created is thus also perpetually created (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 198–99).

Now what does this entail for the God-world relationship? Avicenna reduces the notion of the incipience of the world to a mere contingency (*imkān*) on the Necessary Being (Avicenna, *Ishārāt*, II, 97–115). The cosmos is utterly dependent upon God as its cause, giver of existence, and ontological sustainer. The world is essentially created (*ḥudūth dhātī*), as it is logically posterior to God but not temporally posterior. For Mīr Dāmād, the reduction of creation to contingency does not entail a real beginning of the world. Further, he regards the Avicennan compromise between the perpetual level of the intellects and the eternal level of the divine to be problematic (Mīr Dāmad, *Taqwīm*, 326–29). The beginning of the world may be saved through a radical disjuncture between the notions of perpetuity and eternity. Essences that are logical concomitants of God are not really incipient, and thus the notion of incipience needs to address the issue of whether contingency lies in the nature of events or in their temporality (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 226). Actual essences are instaured in the mind of God and constitute the *nafs al-amr* state of things in this world (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 22). That state pertains to levels of essence and not, as in Mullā Ṣadrā and others, to existence (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 48). Perpetual creation requires two basic metaphysical principles of the mental distinction between existence and essence in contingent beings, and for those contingents essence is ontologically prior and instaured at the level of perpetuity (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 51; cf. Brown 2006, 172–81).

Having accepted with Avicenna the absurdity of creation in time, the question thus arises: where and when does creation take place? While for Avicenna the answer of this question may be meaningless insofar as the world has no real beginning, for Mīr Dāmād the answer is more ontologically absolute and distinct: creation and the incipience of the world occurs at the level of perpetuity because it is there that the immutable God in His eternity interacts with a mutable time. This theory is known as perpetual creation. For Mīr Dāmād, there must be a rupture (*infikāk*) between the divine essence and the cosmos, the latter being absolutely posterior to the former. The cosmos is both conceptually and causally posterior to God because all that exists revolves in the perpetuity of *dahr*, but God alone exists at the level of *sarmad* (Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 75–76; Tavakkulī 2010, 119–23). In *Taqwīm al-īmān* (*Establishing Faith*), he argues that God is absolutely prior and unique in eternity, creative, and together with entities in perpetuity, where He brings them forth from potentiality into actuality and transcends time, whose physical constraints cannot embrace Him (Mīr Dāmad, *Taqwīm*, 329–30). One point to bear in mind in understanding Mīr Dāmād's notion of incipience is his essentialism (Mīr Dāmad, *Taqwīm*, 324–26). He posits three ontological levels: God who is beyond being, essences both in potentiality and actuality in perpetuity, and individual existents that manifest those essences in this phenomenal world. At the level of perpetuity, essences that are potential are those that are with God, sharing simultaneity (*maʿiyya*), but those essences that become actual are posterior to God because they have undergone the process whereby He brings them from potentiality to actuality. The problem thus with the Avicennan model is that it does not explain divine causality at this level and does not characterize the coming into actuality of essences. Thus Mīr Dāmād suggests an intriguing solution to the problem of a timeless deity acting and creating in time.

There are two famous commentaries on the text. The first is by his son-in-law Sayyid Aḥmad ʿAlawī, who wrote an influential commentary on it that he claims was demanded of his teacher, although he wrote it after his death and to explicate the difficulty of the original text (al-ʿAlawī, *Sharḥ*, 88–89). Brown uses it extensively in his dissertation. The other well-known commentary is by a student of his student Mullā Ṣadrā, namely Muḥammad b. ʿAlī-Rižā Āghājānī, dated 1071/1661 (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 2:50–76; French, 279–398). Āghājānī seems to have been a compatriot of Mīr Dāmād, and claims that the spirit of the latter guided his endeavor (Āshtiyanī and Corbin 1971, 2:282). His commentary is extant in two manuscripts of around six hundred folios each, one of which is an autograph.[6] He takes perpetual creation seriously and focuses much attention on the elements of the ontological realm of perpetuity, namely the Platonic forms (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 2:318–95). He states that perpetual creation is the proper position of "theosist scholars and mystical philosophers" (*al-ʿulamāʾ al-mutaʾallihīn*

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[6] According to *al-Dharīʿa* (Ṭihrānī 1983, XIII, 390), there are three copies of this commentary: one is MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā 1471 (793ff, *naskhī*, late seventeenth century with the ownership stamp of Majlisī, rather interestingly), which is incomplete; an autograph copy made in Astarābād then in a private collection in Tehran that had appended an exegesis on *sūrat al-ikhlāṣ*; and a third copy in the private collection of the late Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn muḥaddith Urmavī in Tehran. Ṭihrānī also claims to have seen a copy of a *kalām* work by the author entitled *al-Anwār al-shāhiyya* in the library of Madrasat al-Burūjirdī in Najaf.

wa-l-ḥukamāʾ al-ʿārifīn) (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 2:290). He deals extensively with the arguments for eternity taken from *al-Muḥaṣṣal* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and rebuts them, with perpetuity as the key ontological receptacle for the relationship between mutables and immutables (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 2:374–76; cf. Ṭūsī, *Talkhīṣ*, 122–41). In the commentary to the closing testament, he affirms Mīr Dāmād's disdain for the common person unworthy of philosophy, and the need to complement study with spiritual exercise (Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 2:396–98). The presence of these two major commentaries signals that the immediate posterity understood the significance of the text even if there were few to take up and propagate the ideas.[7]

There are two major and connected implications of perpetual creation. The first is Mīr Dāmād's conceptualization of the Shīʿī theological doctrine of God's change of decree (*badāʾ*) (Subḥānī 2011, 180–203). In *Nibrās al-ḍiyāʾ*, he argues that there is a distinction between *badāʾ* in God's knowledge, His will, and His promulgation and how it applies at the level of temporality, all located within a deeply lettrist text that considers the world to be generated by letters and numbers from the divine command (Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 55–57). At the level of eternity, there is the pure divine essence. At the level of perpetuity, divine decree (*al-qaḍāʾ*) applies that is equated with the scriptural notion of the preserved tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) as the basis for what is. But at the level of time that is a mutable extension with priority and posteriority, exigencies and renewal, hierarchy and relationality, the divine measure (*al-qadar*) is changeable (undergoing *badāʾ*) (Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 56). If God's decree and knowledge is absolute in eternity, then there is no scope for a change in events in this world. What the doctrine attempts to do is to divorce the divine will from divine foreknowledge and posit degrees of the processual unfolding of the latter. Furthermore, it clearly articulates a nonpropositional, nondiscursive view of divine knowledge: God's knowledge of events is not propositional, nor does His knowledge engender a particular disposition within His mind that may alter and change with "changes" in His knowledge and the unfolding of events. Divine "consciousness" does not contain processes of duration and deliberation.

Mīr Dāmād accepts the standard Shīʿī defense of the doctrine when he says that the place of *badāʾ* in creation is like that of abrogation in the revelation (Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 55). But he goes beyond it. God is utterly beyond both time and perpetuity; He is neither in time nor with time. Existents in this world, however, are limited by extension and duration and are temporal entities, while occurring in some form in perpetuity as well. Every originated thing has a share in three types of creation: essential, perpetual, and temporal (Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 59). Temporal events that occur in this world are limited by extension but do not have a corresponding extension in perpetuity (and certainly not in eternity where there is no extension). Now God and His attributes (including creation and knowledge) manifest His existence at these three levels of being and time, but their nature varies according to the ontological level of manifestation (Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 62–63). No one event in either time or perpetuity that results from the activity of a divine name is the same as another. Thus the appearance of the progression of events in our temporal extension is unlike that of its extension in perpetuity, and quite unlike its cause in eternity.

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[7] His students Mullā Ṣadrā and Mullā Shamsā both wrote glosses on the text; see Ṭihrānī 1983, XVII, 32; Dānishpazhūh 1981, 63. There are attested in the margins of the lithograph; cf. Mīr Dāmād 1898, 5, 15, 35, 42, 55, 58, 60, 71, 72, 279. In *al-Dharīʿa*, Ṭihrānī also mentions an autograph copy made by Mullā Ṣadrā with his glosses.

The concerns of a theistic metaphysics that seeks to understand the relationship between God and the cosmos, between individual responsibility and ability to discern truth and divine determinism, influences the theories of time in the Safavid period. Mīr Dāmād's theory assumes a processual nature of reality in which everything is in flux and all entities are dynamic and not static. While it is a product of his intellectual formation and stands upon the shoulders of the Greeks and classical Islamic thinkers, he is not a conventional thinker in the slightest. It might even be tempting to label his views as consistent with late Neoplatonism. But he moved that paradigm and expressed key concerns as a theological thinker from a Shīʿī context reacting to mature Islamic Platonic/Neoplatonic traditions in the Safavid period. What may be significant is that no thinker in the Safavid period upheld the eternity of the world as Avicenna had. This may be because the notion of philosophy has loosened to encompass theology and mysticism and commitment to a "religious life," and certainly postulating that the world was eternal seemed to belie the Qurʾān and many famous sayings of the Shīʿī imams.

The second, and corollary, is the implication more directly for human agency and the problem of the "creation of acts" as discussed in *al-Īqāẓāt* (Mīr Dāmād, *Īqāẓāt*; cf. Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, 416–23). He begins by making a distinction between the complete cause of existence (*al-jāʿil al-tāmm*) who is God alone and the direct agent of an act (*al-fāʿil al-mubāshir*) who is the human (Mīr Dāmād, *Īqāẓāt*, 4; cf. Mīr Dāmād, *Khalq*). The capability of the human is within the realms of the four Aristotelian causes and their efficacy, and thus humans are capable of acting, possessing will, but also compelled by other causes acting upon them functioning in a hierarchy of causes stemming from the One (Mīr Dāmād, *Īqāẓāt*, 6). Will pertains to knowledge and not to the intention to act. Out of the five chapters, he examines the issue of the existence of evil and the nature of creation in the first two, and then the following three comprise corroborating scriptural texts and exegesis of those texts in accordance with his position. The existence of evil is an accident of creation insofar as it signals a lacuna or a shortcoming that is the feature of a finite, temporal object; it is not due to God's withholding of his bounties but arises from the inherent weaknesses of the propensities and merits (*al-istiʿdādāt wa-l-istiḥqāqāt*) of bodies. The imagery of light and dark, of perfection and imperfection, is directly taken from an existing, strongly Neoplatonic assumption on being as good and privation as evil—and here, despite the seemingly Illuminationist language, the influences are Avicennan, as seen by the citations (Mīr Dāmād, *Īqāẓāt*, 19–27). Matter, motion, and the causes that arise in matter have a beginning in time even though the process of creation is instaured at the level of perpetuity (Mīr Dāmād, *Īqāẓāt*, 29–30). So at the intermediate level of perpetuity the order of the cosmos is created and established, but the process of temporality, of generation and corruption that affects all beings within this cosmos means that causality works within the ontological level of temporality (*al-zamān*), and hence agents within that receptacle are responsible for the good and the bad that they produce, while there remains a distinction between God's knowledge and decree of those acts, and how they unfold in this world in measure. The very notion of perpetual creation requires there to be a clear distinction between the process of creation (*ibdāʿ*) and generation (*takwīn*).

Furthermore, since God's knowledge is timeless, fatalism is avoided, as events in time are not directly caused by timeless knowledge (Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, 64–65). The key ontological level for theodicy is thus neither the absolute and vital realm of eternity and the pure names whose sole referent is the divine essence, nor the temporal realm of events in this world, but rather the mediating realm of perpetuity in which trajectories of events and their sequence are in flux. In this intermediate realm, nothing is determined and nothing is immutable, while also being determined and mutable. The doctrine of *badāʾ* thus needs to be understood at this level and links to responsibility, as a compromise between radical libertarianism that would make God subject to the mutability of temporal beings and radical necessitarianism that would place temporal events of this world beyond the pure immutability of the eternal.

20.3. Perpetual Creation and Its Legacy

The problem of the eternity of the cosmos is central to the entirety of Mīr Dāmād's corpus. Even in his introduction to *ḥadīth* that includes a commentary on the proemium of Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, the major collection of classical Imāmī *ḥadīth* popularized in the Safavid period, he rehearses his theory (Mīr Dāmād, *Rawāshiḥ*, 35–39). It demonstrates once again the significance of the Avicennan substrate (he explicitly cites the *Metaphysics* of *al-Shifāʾ*) of his definitions of temporality and creation, focusing on terms such as generation (*al-takwīn*), creation (*al-ibdāʿ*), and producing (*al-ṣunʿ*) and relating them to activities at the different levels that we have seen of time (*al-zamān*), perpetuity (*al-dahr*), and eternity (*al-sarmad*). In another work, his theological summa *Taqwīm al-īmān*, he shows the holism of his metaphysics when he argues that the concept of perpetual creation only makes sense as a concomitant of essentialism if we understand essences to be the basic building blocks of the cosmos (Mīr Dāmad, *Taqwīm*, 323). In *Khulsat al-malakūt*, he claims that the insight of perpetual creation was a divine revelation received on the night of 13 Shaʿbān 1014 / 5 December 1604 (Mīr Dāmād, *Muṣannafāt* I, 283).

But apart from *al-Qabasāt* the key text for the transmission of his theory was *al-Ufuq al-mubīn*, which Mīr Dāmād taught and became a major text in the study of philosophy in India (Awjabī 2006b). Interestingly in this text, he seems to respond to some of his student Mullā Ṣadrā's positions, including refuting his position on motion in substance and on the modulate, intensifying nature of being (Mīr Dāmād, *Ufuq*, 114–16, 714). After the ontological propaedeutics, a large section (the sixth) deals with his position on perpetual creation, focusing on his redefinition of temporality as a feature of existence and not of motion (Mīr Dāmād, *Ufuq*, 447ff). His Avicennan inclinations remain clear. He begins, as in *al-Qabasāt*, with the three ontological states of time, perpetuity, and eternity: against the theologians, he argues that time is real, and against the philosophers that it is finite (Mīr Dāmād, *Ufuq*, 504–5). He then cites some of the same proof texts from Avicenna and the *Theologia*—and even includes a refutation of Abū-l-Barakāt on the eternity of the cosmos (Mīr Dāmād, *Ufuq*, 509–17). Like most of his works, it also remains incomplete and never quite goes beyond the rather detailed discussion of the states of temporality.

Given the dominance of Mullā Ṣadrā in later Iranian philosophy, it is worth asking what happened to Mīr Dāmād's thought. Mullā Ṣadrā himself found no space for the theory of perpetual creation; in his own treatise on the incipience of the cosmos, he defends an Aristotelian conception of temporality based on motion, albeit through his own rather anti-Aristotelian principle of substantial motion that relates God with the cosmos while citing Mīr Dāmād's connection of temporality to three ontological states (Shīrāzī, *Ḥudūth*, 130). In a sense this is surprising; given the student's insistence on the primacy of the ontological, it is unusual for him not to consider time and creation in terms of being. Mīr Dāmād's approach is precisely to redefine temporality and separate it from the Aristotelian conception of motion and change. A recent study has suggested that Mullā Ṣadrā was more successful because he located his theory of incipience of the cosmos within a mystical vision of a singular reality of being (Tavakkulī 2009, 497–523). So it seems, according to that assessment, Mīr Dāmād's account is too rigorously Avicennan. But the failure of Mullā Ṣadrā seems to be that in trying to save the agency of both God and humans within the pyramid of being, given his deeply monistic tendencies, he does neither: the cosmos seems to be merely a natural procession from the One, while humans only act according to their place and propensities within the system.

On the other hand, Mīr Dāmād's two students Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī and Niẓām al-Dīn Gīlānī did defend his positions; the latter may have had a major role in the transmission of his thought to India. Mullā Shamsā in his text explicitly responds to his friend Mullā Ṣadrā's positions in his *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, drawing upon his own glosses on Khafrī on the *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, and defends Mīr Dāmād's concept of perpetual creation as well as the metaphysics of essence; he criticizes Mullā Ṣadrā (*baʿḍ al-fuḍalāʾ al-muʿāṣirīn*) for holding that all separable beings are incipient in time but at the same time holding that higher intellects have no temporal beginning (Corbin 1981, 140–50; Āshtiyānī and Corbin 1971, 1:465–93; Gīlānī, *Ḥudūth*, 105).[8] We know from Mullā Ṣadrā's own testimony that he had sent a copy of his work to Mullā Shamsā expecting a response (Awjabī 2006a, 103, citing a note on codex MS Tehran, University Central Library 2602). Mullā Shamsā begins with a set of metaphysical propaedeutics on essentialism and the need to posit a mental mode of existence (*al-wujūd al-dhihnī*) (Gīlānī, *Ḥudūth*, 2–4). He then proceeds to discussing causality and the nature of priority and posteriority, citing Avicennan texts that Mīr Dāmād also uses: the result is to say that causes precede their effects essentially at the level of *nafs al-amr*—which he later associated with perpetuity (Gīlānī, *Ḥudūth*, 7, 18). The next preliminary principle—consistent with Mīr Dāmād—concerns the nature and unity of predication and how the higher beings contemplate. Mullā Shamsā seems to preempt an objection made later about the nature of perpetuity and the lack of dimensionality (Gīlānī, *Ḥudūth*, 19–24). Nonexistence at the level of perpetuity is not absolute as such, partly for the simple reason that it is not existent or a receptacle for existence. He then moves on to Mīr Dāmād's decoupling of temporality and motion and refuting the notion of unreal time (Gīlānī, *Ḥudūth*, 32–35). The next step involves an extended refutation for the coarse notion of the eternity of the cosmos (Gīlānī, *Ḥudūth*, 50–64). The final section tackles Mullā Ṣadrā's treatise and his position (Gīlānī, *Ḥudūth*, 105–11). What emerges from reading this sophisticated text is the clear sense of a learned treatise that expounds upon Mīr Dāmād's theory in far more accessible, terminologically clear, and comprehensible language.

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[8] I am grateful to ʿAlī-Riżā Aṣgharī for sharing with me his critical edition of the text that is based on the following four manuscripts: MS Tehran, University Central Library 9108 dating from the twelfth/eighteenth century; MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 11520 dated 1052/1642, MS Tehran, Kitābkhāna-yi Malik 1671 dated 1061/1650; and MS Qum, Kitābkhāna-yi Āyatullāh Marʿashī 8746, dated twelfth/eighteenth century.

Niẓām al-Dīn Gīlānī wrote a short treatise entitled *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam* in which he presented a summary of his teacher's position, which he defined as Yemeni philosophy (Gīlānī, *Rasāʾil*, 51–72). He stated that his understanding was based on actually having read these texts with his teacher and like him having benefited from locating it within an Avicennan/Greek context. The main point is that there needs to be a distinction between God and the physical cosmos and that separation can only be provided through an ontological state of perpetuity (Gīlānī, *Rasāʾil*, 53–54). The cosmos of necessity needs to be preceded by real nonexistence. He then proceeds to cite the same passages from Avicenna that Mīr Dāmād does. He hints at the implications for theodicy discussed above when he states that the "preserved tablet" exists at the level of perpetuity (Gīlānī, *Rasāʾil*, 65). On the whole it is a relatively straightforward and short text that is quite unlike the more thoughtful and detailed exposition of Mullā Shamsā. However, one feature of the text that is interesting is his insistence that the three ontological states of temporality share homologies between God, the cosmos, and humanity—and he consistently refers to the cosmos as *al-insān al-kabīr* (the *macro-anthropos*) that is perpetually being created in this state of "togetherness" with the One (Gīlānī, *Rasāʾil*, 66, 72).

Later still, Jamāl al-Dīn Khʷānsārī (d. 1125/1713) in his textbook gloss on Khafrī, and Muḥammad Zamān Kāshānī (d. after 1172/1759) in his *Mirʾāt al-zamān*, criticized the concept of perpetual creation (Davānī, *Sabʿ rasāʾil*, 229–37; Kāshānī, *Mirʾāt*). Khʷānsārī argues that there is little that separates in actuality Mīr Dāmād's position from the philosophical position of essential creation, and in fact making perpetuity an ontological receptacle is problematic because it lacks dimensionality and hence relies on a fallacious analogy with temporality as an "unreal time" (*al-zamān al-mawhūm*); he rejects the gloss of Mīr Dāmād's student ʿAbd al-Ghaffār Gīlānī that talk of ontological states and temporalities is merely a *façon de parler*, precisely because he does not accept the redefinition of time as an ontological state and not a measure of motion and also because he cannot conceive of nonexistence as being actual in the state of perpetuity as he rejects Mīr Dāmād's metaphysical essentialism (Davānī, *Sabʿ rasāʾil*, 233–34).

Kāshānī's text is a historical excursus through Shīʿī theology (both of the rational and scriptural types) on the topic of time and creation (focusing especially on the medieval theologian par excellence Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī), agreeing with Khʷānsārī and arguing that the position of the theologians of the school has always been that the cosmos is preceded by an unreal and infinite set of temporal moments (*al-zamān al-mawhūm*)—this concept of time must be conjectured and mentally posited since if it entailed an actual chain of temporal moments, then the law of the impossibility of an actual infinite would negate it (Kāshānī, *Mirʾāt*, 3). He is motivated by Khʷānsārī, but also by Mīr Dāmād's claim that there is no debate on either essential creation or temporal creation, but rather the issue at hand is perpetual creation by which the cosmos is posterior to God by a clear separate that is pure nonexistence (*masbūqiyyat al-wujūd bi-l-ʿadam al-maḥḍ masbūqiyya infikākiyya*) (Kāshānī, *Mirʾāt*, 4). Like Khʷānsārī, he argues that perpetuity cannot be the locus for creation because it is dimensionless (Kāshānī, *Mirʾāt*, 85), and that Mīr Dāmād's decoupling of time from motion does not work because he uses the notion of "terminal motion" (*ḥaraka qaṭiʿiyya*) in a nontechnical sense (and here he cites Davānī) (Kāshānī, *Mirʾāt*, 14, 36).

Kāshānī's contemporary Ismāʿī Khājūʾī (d. 1172/1759) responded by defending Mīr Dāmād's redefinition of temporality in his *Ibṭāl al-zamān al-mawhūm*, partly by arguing, following Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī, that the ontological level of perpetuity is like the status of the thing in itself (*nafs al-amr*) and time and tense are real dimensions *in re* (Davānī, *Sabʿ rasāʾil*, 241–83, especially 245–47; Jahānbakhsh 2010, 141). More interestingly, Khājūʾī argues that perpetual creation is the correct philosophical and scriptural account, and was not invented by Mīr Dāmād but by Dawānī in his Persian treatise *Nūr al-hidāya fī-l-imāma* (Davānī, *Sabʿ rasāʾil*, 268–70). In that treatise, Dawānī does say that according to philosophers there are three types of incipience that relate to the three ontological states of eternity, perpetuity, and temporality; he asserts that the philosophically coherent view is perpetual creation because the cosmos must be preceded by pure extramental nonexistence (*ʿadam-i ṣarīḥ-i khārijī*), but he does not provide an argument as Mīr Dāmād does (Davānī, *Rasāʾil*, 114–16). What this actually suggests is that we need to carefully reconsider the influence of Dawānī's philosophical positions in the Safavid period.

The reception of his thought in India similarly was unfavorable: first, Maḥmūd Jawnpūrī (d. 1062/1652) refuted his position in *al-Shams al-bāzigha*, and later the school of Khayrābād adopted his *al-Ufuq al-mubīn* as a school text and rejected its metaphysical premises, not least on the issue of creation, where they defended a theological version of Avicenna (Rizvi 2011). Interest in his work in India was precisely a result of the growing concern with the study of natural philosophy in the curriculum, hence the question of the incipience of the cosmos. However, perhaps one of the reasons why the theory of perpetual creation did not spark interest and the attention of scholars was its rather difficult nature; as he says himself in *al-Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, a scholar trained in the Avicennan tradition alone cannot grasp the subtlety and difficulty of the theory, for that requires an act of grace and the practice of spiritual exercises, as it is only the one who is capable of doffing his body and ascending to the beatific vision who can possibly grasp *ḥuduth dahrī* (Mīr Dāmād, *Ṣirāṭ*, 213–14). He does not make it easy, and certainly given his disdain for those unworthy of philosophy, this is unsurprising.

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CHAPTER 21

ṢADR AL-DĪN AL-SHĪRĀZĪ'S (D. 1635) *DIVINE WITNESSES*

CÉCILE BONMARIAGE

THE name of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, better known as Mullā Ṣadrā, is one of the few names of thinkers of eleventh-/seventeenth-century Iran to have reached a broader audience. He is known for his metaphysical positions, in particular to have championed what is considered to be an ontological turn (even if this has to be qualified), and also for his ideas regarding epistemology and acquisition of knowledge, and eschatology. How to approach Ṣadrā's oeuvre remains, however, a delicate question. I chose here one of his smaller comprehensive books as entry point to his thought, the *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* (*The Divine Witnesses*), a text explicitly designed as a summary of the questions explained at length in Ṣadrā's longer books. The conciseness and comprehensiveness of the *Shawāhid* make it a key text to access Ṣadrā's method and ideas, as we will see shortly, after a brief account of aspects of Ṣadrā's life and intellectual milieu that will help situate the philosopher and his thought.

21.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Shīrāzī is a thinker who lived in Iran in the Safavid period, during the reigns of Shāh ʿAbbās I (995/1587–1038/1629) and Shāh Ṣafī (1038/1629–1052/1642). This historical situation is not insignificant for Ṣadrā's philosophical pursuit: the Safavids' support of a renewal of Twelver Shīʿī activity, including philosophical speculation, and their patronage of Twelver centers in Iran is well known, as are the discussions at the time on the relation between clergy and state and the nature of clerical authority, and the nascent *uṣūlī-akhbārī* debate in Shīʿī jurisprudence (Newman 2008; Abisaab 2004). Ṣadrā's family was linked to the court, as were his teachers. But his own situation vis-à-vis the Safavid court and Safavid elite in general is more problematic, as is shown by his failing to find a patron until late in his life.

Recent scholarship has provided ample details on Ṣadrā's career (Khamenehi 2000; Khʷajavi 1366/1988; Rizvi 2002 and 2007, and the references mentioned there), from Shiraz where he was born around 979/1571, to Qazwin and later Isfahan, the successive capitals of the Safavid empire, where he studied philosophical and religious sciences with eminent scholars of his time. The two most influential of his masters are Shaykh Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī, known as Shaykh Bahāʾī (d. 1030/1620–21), and Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631). With the first, Ṣadrā studied religious sciences, such as *fiqh*, Qurʾānic exegesis, and *ḥadīth*. But it is with Mīr Dāmād, with whom he studied speculative sciences, that Ṣadrā seems to have built a particularly strong connection, as attested by their correspondence and by the quotations and allusions made by Ṣadrā in his works.

After an unsuccessful return to Shiraz (dated around 1014/1605; see Rizvi 2002, 184), Ṣadrā retired to Kahak, near Qom (earliest date attested: 1024/1615). He then lived an itinerant life between Qom, Isfahan, and Shiraz, until around 1040/1630. He finally settled in Shiraz, apparently at the request of Imām Qulī Khān, the governor of Fars (killed by the order of Shāh Ṣafī in 1042/1633), to teach at the Madrasa-ye Khān (on the governor, see Savory 1998 and Newman 2008; note the proximity between the date of this return to Shiraz and the end of the reign of Shāh ʿAbbās I, who died in January 1038/1629). The dating of these events in Ṣadrā's life is uncertain, and mainly based on evidence from his works. The same uncertainty surrounds the date of his death: Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī is said to have died on his way to his seventh (actual number or symbolic value?) pilgrimage to Mecca, but the date of this event is not quite clear. According to the traditional accounts in biographical dictionaries, this happened in 1050/1640–41, but it seems that another date, given by one of Ṣadrā's grandsons, who said that his grandfather died in 1045/1635–36 in Basra and was buried in Najaf, is more reliable (Khamenehi 2000, 414; Rizvi 2007, 28–30).

21.2. Intellectual Background

Ṣadrā's writings show a great variety of influences that provide a first approach to the intellectual context of his work. Avicenna (d. 428/1037) and the Avicennan tradition, especially Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) understanding of it, as well as the writings of Avicenna's student Bahmanyār (d. 458/1067), are among the most influential sources used by Ṣadrā. But they are not the only ones: Akbarī writings and Ishrāqī texts are other important elements in Ṣadrā's intellectual universe, as well as the philosophical tradition exemplified in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century by such authors as Dawānī (d. 908/1502) and the Dashtakīs (on whom see Pourjavady 2011 and Pourjavady's chapter in this volume). Ṣadrā's writings also reflect the return to the ancients characteristic of his time. Seventeenth-century Iran witnessed an important activity of copying and studying the texts of the ancients, and a return to the writings produced at the beginning of *falsafa*, the *Theologia Aristotelis* in particular (see the number of manuscripts of this text produced in this period, the many quotations found, and, in the generation next to Ṣadrā's, the commentary on the *Theologia* made by Saʿīd Qummī). A list of books pertaining to Ṣadrā's private collection recently discovered confirms what his writings show about his sources (Barakat 1377/1998; commented translation Rizvi 2007, 117–35).

But all these sources and influences do not by themselves generate Ṣadrā's thought, especially since Ṣadrā insists that his most personal findings are due to personal experience, as we will see when discussing his method.

21.3. The *Divine Witnesses* (*al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*)

21.3.1. Place in Ṣadra's Works

Ṣadrā is a prolific author, and his thought is expressed in a large number of writings, mainly in Arabic. The most important perhaps is *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliyya fī-l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya* (*The Transcendent Wisdom in the Intellectual Journeys; Asfār*, 1:13), often referred to simply as the *Asfār* (*The Journeys*). The impressive size of this summa is due mainly to the fact that, in this book, Ṣadrā enters into the meanders of previous debates, and quotes the texts of his predecessors at length, explicitly or not. But the *Asfār* is not the only major work in Ṣadrā's oeuvre: his exegesis of portions of the Qurʾān and his uncompleted commentary on the *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* are also important sources to approach his thought. Other works include treatises on a particular topic, some very short.

All these works are not of one and the same type. In his commentary on Sūrat Yā Sīn (*Tafsīr*, 5:202), Ṣadrā draws a distinction between what he considers to be works written according to the intellectual method, where demonstrations are central (he mentions the *Asfār* as an example of this type of writing), and his exegesis (*tafsīr*), where hints and reminders are given (*ishārāt wa-tanbīhāt*, the very words used by Avicenna in the title of one of his books). In the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (*Keys to the Invisible*), a text devoted to exegetical method, Ṣadrā reiterates this distinction and lists titles of what he considers his "intellectual books," in contrast with the *Mafātīḥ* itself: the *Asfār al-arbaʿa*, the *Kitāb al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, and the *Kitāb al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* (*Mafātīḥ*, 106). This does not, however, impair the unity of Ṣadrā's work: it is one thought that reveals itself in various modes. This corresponds to Ṣadrā's conception of the intrinsic unity of knowledge, as expressed in the *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, where the intellect is described as an inner prophet, and the Prophet as an outer intellect (*Sharḥ Uṣūl*, 1:363).

The *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* is thus an example of the intellectual or philosophical type of writing. This book differs from others in that it is short in comparison to a work like the *Asfār* (Ṣadrā presents his work as a summary, "without lengthy refutation of opposite positions"; see *Shawāhid*, 5 and 61/81),[1] and it presents a complete cycle of Ṣadrā's understanding of reality, in comparison with treatises centered on one topic, such as the *Risāla fī ḥudūth al-ʿālam* or the *Mashāʿir*.

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[1] The first number in references to this work corresponds to the pagination in the edition by J. Ashtiyānī, the second number to the pagination in the edition by M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād. When the two paginations coincide, only one number is given.

The position of the *Shawāhid* compared with the *Asfār* is clear: the *Shawāhid* is meant as a summary that refers to the *Asfār*, sometimes only vaguely alluded to by expressions such as "in our summa" (*fī kitābinā al-kabīr; Shawāhid*, 22/30), for a more detailed treatment of the questions discussed. The *Shawāhid* refers also to other texts by Ṣadrā, such as the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Ḥadīd*, or the *Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*. Parts of the text are parallel to passages found in the same *Mabdaʾ* and in the *Masāʾil al-qudsiyya*. The *Shawāhid* itself is referred to in several texts, including the *Risāla fī ḥudūth al-ʿālam*, a text for which one of the earliest known manuscripts, copied in Qazwin, is dated 1034/1625 (MS Princeton University, Islamic MSS., New Series 2003).

21.3.2. Ṣadrā's Method as Shown in *The Divine Witnesses*: A Reading of the Prologue

From the very beginning of the text of the *Shawāhid*, in the prologue, the reader is made aware of the peculiar character of Ṣadrā's method in doing philosophy. The vocabulary used to describe the process through which knowledge is acquired is mostly that of light and enlightenment. Ṣadrā speaks of secrets obtained through connection to a higher realm, and not to be divulged to the unworthy, and everything points to some kind of mystically or spiritually connoted undertaking. The experiential and intuitive character of true knowledge, if not its illuminative nature, is imaginatively expressed in another text as follows (the passage is about the real understanding of *tawḥīd*): "Whoever wants to attain this lofty goal by means of such demonstrations built in the corners of his heart [a term used to refer to the rational soul], on the basis of such unfounded premises and of such weak principles, is like a spider that would strive to capture the *anqāʾ* [a fabulous bird, similar to the phoenix] with a web that it weaves in the corners of a room" (*Tafsīr Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, in *Tafsīr*, 1:48–49).

What Ṣadrā wishes to stress by this is the need for a deeper experiential basis to ground any sound understanding of what is real. In order to "know things as they are," which is the ultimate point of human perfection (*Asfār*, 1:20), direct experience is needed, but not the kind of direct experience having to do with the material world and our senses: what is needed is rather inner vision, or spiritual tasting. We will see shortly that for Ṣadrā, who follows here a line of thought developed in the Islamic tradition from the twelfth century on, with such key figures as Suhrawardī and Ibn ʿArabī, to know things as they are is to understand that, despite the apparent multiplicity, all that is ultimately participates in one reality, and to recognize in every thing a manifestation of the One. In order to reach this unified vision of what is, and to perceive the underlying structure that unifies the multiplicity of the phenomenal world, demonstrations and rational arguments based solely on our experience of this world do not suffice. Another basis is needed to go beyond mere mental constructions, perhaps intellectually attractive, but having little to do with what really is.

This is not to say that demonstrations and rational arguments are to be rejected as proper means of acquiring knowledge. The emphasis placed in the prologue of the *Shawāhid* on the experiential character of true knowledge, or of the knowledge of fundamental metaphysical principles, should not lead the reader to misunderstand Ṣadrā's mode of thinking as being wholly intuitive or mystical: a reader with such a misconception would be surprised at the demonstrative tone of Ṣadrā's writings. Pure inspirations are not Ṣadrā's goal: they only provide the starting point for the building of a comprehensive system based on demonstrative arguments. This equally important aspect of Ṣadrā's method, visible throughout the text of the *Shawāhid*, is also perceptible in the prologue: toward the end, when describing the contents of the book, Ṣadrā introduces a different vocabulary and speaks of demonstration, of the reflexive or cogitative faculty that, like a diver, brings out the pearls produced from the gems granted from above in the soul's shell, from "the bottom of wisdom's sea to the shore of demonstrative exposition." These pearls, pierced by the verifying activity of the rational faculty, are the material for the *Shawāhid* (*Shawāhid*, 5/5–6).

The claim made by Ṣadrā is thus not that reason is not a proper way to attain knowledge: it is rather that the first principles of any real philosophical understanding of reality can only be reached by a kind of experience beyond reasoning, and, further, that intellect has to be enlightened to reach certain levels of knowledge, or in other words, that some things are not accessible with unenlightened human reason. Without intuitive knowledge, one can only build a system devoid of meaning because not rooted in reality. But intuitive knowledge alone, expressed in the language of experience with no attempt at demonstration, deprives itself of a precious safeguard; further, even if what is expressed in such a language is true, there remains a risk of misunderstanding and of dismissal.

This is what happens with a number of key judgments made in the Akbarī tradition, and misunderstood by "those who want to understand their goals and the meaning of what they affirm through the reading of their writings alone" (*Asfār*, 2:319). Experience of the deeper metaphysical structure of what is allows one to recognize behind the often problematic, if not apparently untenable, Akbarī ideas a similar understanding of reality, and to give it a proper rendering (Ṣadrā speaks of correction and emendation), according to the canons of proper demonstrative reasoning and not open to refutation, as Akbarī texts often are when taken in their first meaning (this being a consequence of the Akbarīs' total immersion in spiritual exercises, and their preoccupation with what in their eyes is more important, says Ṣadrā; on this, see *Asfār*, 6:183 and 284).

The experiential basis of metaphysics gives it greater certainty: it allows the overcoming of doubts and blind imitation of the opinions of masters (*Shawāhid*, 4). This opens in turn the possibility of making progress in the understanding of the world around us and beyond, or in the exposition of this understanding: things can be discovered since knowledge is not a repetition but a personal experience. Ṣadrā himself claims to have made such discoveries or, in his words, to have been singled out to be granted knowledge of certain things that none of the ancients and no modern had found before him (*Shawāhid*, 4; 39–40/53–54). What is presented by Ṣadrā as his personal achievement is actually often the demonstrative proof of what had been only alluded to before him (another sign of his will to combine both paths toward knowledge).

Ṣadrā advocates thus a balance between demonstrative rational method and spiritual experience. He is cautious, however, not to mix the two, and defines a clear separation in his mode of exposition. In the *Asfār*, this is clearly stated as follows: "The Sufis [he speaks here about Akbarī thinkers] have the habit to be content with [or: to limit themselves to] taste and inspiration alone in the judgments they make. As for ourselves, we do not entirely rely on what has no demonstration, and we do not mention it in our philosophical writings" (*Asfār*, 9:234). In the *Shawāhid*, Ṣadrā recognizes the persuasive power of inspired discourse: this, he says, is no less likely to lead the true seeker to certain knowledge than the arguments of those who use demonstrations (*Shawāhid*, 221/263). But this is not, however, his own way of exposition: his discourse is in the language of demonstration. When things come to what can only be grasped through inner vision, there is no point or use in writing them down: the best one can do is to allude to these, to give some hints for the reader to recognize, but they remain outside the scope of his book (see *Shawāhid*, 40/54, on God's knowledge).

What has been said here about Ṣadrā's method in doing philosophy has a clear *ishrāqī* tone and is reminiscent of what Suhrawardī says in the prologue and final admonition of his *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*. A few extracts from this work will suffice to show the clear link between the two. The necessity to combine rational activity and spiritual path can be found in the following text: "This book of ours is for the one who seeks mystical speculation and discursive philosophy" (§6; trans. Walbridge and Ziai, slightly modified); and again, at the end of the *Ḥikma*: "Give [this book] only to one who has mastered the method of the Peripatetics [that is philosophy in the Avicennan way], and is at the same time a lover of God's light" (§279). What is said about progress in knowledge, and the claim to have been granted new findings, can also be traced back to the same source: "He who studies [this book] will learn that what escaped the ancients and moderns God has entrusted to my tongue," says Suhrawardī in his final admonition (§280). And in the introduction, one reads: "Knowledge is not restricted to some people, so that after them the door of the Kingdom is shut and the world is denied the (possibility) of obtaining more: no, the Giver of knowledge . . . *is not stingy with the Unseen* (Quran 81:23)" (§2). Yet another aspect of Ṣadrā's writings, namely to present his views as a return to what the ancients said, by contrast to the errors of the more recent thinkers, gives again a clear *ishrāqī* flavor to his texts.

For Ṣadrā, his own undertaking follows the footsteps of *ishrāq*, is in line with the Akbarī tradition, with which he shares many principles and fundamental views, and is also an accomplishment of the philosophical tradition, represented by Avicenna. Even if it is profoundly different in its metaphysical presuppositions from Ṣadrā's own thinking, Avicennan philosophy remains the framework of Ṣadrā's thought. The very name "higher philosophy" (or, in a translation with a more spiritual flavor, "transcendental wisdom") used by Ṣadrā to characterize his method or his way of philosophizing (see especially the very title of his summa, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliyya fī-l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya*), is an expression used by Avicenna in his *Ishārāt* (*Ishārāt, namaṭ* 10, faṣl. 9, 210). In Ṭūsī's commentary, through which Ṣadrā reads the *Ishārāt*, this is explained in the following terms: "These questions fall under higher philosophy, because Peripatetic philosophy is pure discursive philosophy but these questions . . . only come to completion by way of discursive inquiry and reasoning, *side by side with* revelation and spiritual experience; [this kind of philosophy] is thus higher in comparison to the first" (Ṭūsī, *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt*, 3:401). This higher philosophy is exactly what Ṣadrā aims to do. The words "hints" and "reminders" (*ishārāt* and *tanbīhāt*) placed at the end of the prologue of the *Shawāhid* (*Shawāhid*, 5), even if they are often used, are not there by chance, and cannot but recall the name of Avicenna in the reader's mind.

21.4. Ṣadrā's Thought as Shown in *The Divine Witnesses*

Ṣadrā's goal in his writings is to provide a comprehensive explanation of the nature and origins of reality, which, in the tradition where his thought is situated, translates itself in terms of an account of the relationship between a First Principle and everything other than itself (or in a general and somewhat nontechnical language, between God and the world), and of man's place and role in the universe. This is also the case in the *Shawāhid*. The text is comprised of five parts, called "scenes" or "loci of witnessing" (*mashhad*); these are further divided into "evidences" or "witnesses" (*shāhid*). The logic of the text can be described as follows. The first *mashhad*, on general concepts and principles, is by far the longest of the *Shawāhid*. It provides the basic principles of Ṣadrā's metaphysics and draws important distinctions such as that between mental being, or being in the mind, and concrete being. The second and third *mashhad* describe the cycle of being, from its origin from the One to its return to the One. These chapters discuss the nature of the First Principle, within itself and in its relationship with creation, and include a discussion on the emanation of what is other than the First, ending in the generation of the physical world, culminating in the coming to be of the human soul. The fourth *mashhad* deals with corporeal resurrection, a topic treated separately, due to its importance for Ṣadrā. The text ends with a last *mashhad* on prophecy and guardianship.

21.5. Being

The *Shawāhid* begins with a statement of a number of principles defining key metaphysical positions underlying the author's understanding of reality. One of the foundations of Ṣadrā's metaphysical understanding, that everything that is participates in one reality, the very act of being, is clearly stated at the beginning of the text: "Being," says Ṣadrā, "deserves more than anything to have a reality because it is through it that what is other than being has a reality . . .: being is that by which everything that is real gets its reality" (*Shawāhid*, 6/9). In this proposition, Ṣadrā claims, against those who consider being as a concept that is nothing over and above, and adds nothing to, the reality of what is, that being as act is the very reality of everything that is. But what is being, and what does it mean to be a reality? We have to turn to the *Asfār* to get a clear answer: "What we mean by reality," says Ṣadrā, "is nothing else than that which is the source of an external effect" (*Asfār*, 2:319).

Now, if everything that is is essentially an act of being, the main question is to determine what differentiates the acts of being one from another, or whether and how to acknowledge multiplicity. Ṣadrā's answer is simple: differentiation is primarily due to the degree of being, that is, the greater or lesser level of perfection in being represented by each portion of reality. For each act of being, to be this particular level of perfection of being thus constitutes what it is. The differentiation in degree between beings makes of each of them one particular thing, different from the others. Reality outside of our minds (what is called "concrete reality," *ḥaqīqa ʿayniyya*), is thus for Ṣadrā constituted of singular acts of being (*wujūdāt*), which are as many ipseities (Ṣadrā speaks of individual ipseities or individual he-nesses, *huwiyāt shakhṣiyya*), with different properties, even though, at the same time, there is a fundamental and deeper unity of every thing that is.

This affirmation of a multiplicity of acts of being distinct by their degree of participation to (or perfection in) the very reality they share is the result, or the expression, of a metaphysical principle known as *tashkīk*, modulation of being. This principle is defined as follows: a reality is said to be modulated when the priority and posteriority, or perfection and deficiency, of its various degrees is in their very reality, and is not due to some external element (see *Asfār*, 1:36–37). Surprisingly little is said about *tashkīk* in the *Shawāhid*: the idea is certainly present (cf. the section on the distinction between beings, *Shawāhid*, 10/15), but the word *tashkīk* is used only twice (*Shawāhid*, 75/97 and 135/165). There is no mention either of the predicamental aspect of the notion of *tashkīk*, and no account of the fact that it is first a property of terms, one of the kinds of predication, used for terms that are said of different things (or of things that share a same name) with one and the same meaning, but with a difference in the way each *deserves* this attribution (Treiger 2011; Bonmariage 2007, 54–66; see Avicenna, *Shifāʾ*, *Maqūlāt*, 10–11 and Shīrāzī, *Asfār*, 1:35–37). All the reader gets is a reference to the *Asfār* for a more thorough treatment of the question (*Shawāhid*, 135/165).

Avicenna used being as an example only for the two first kinds of differentiation in the way a term with the same meaning can be attributed to different things, anteriority and posteriority, primacy or dignity and its opposite. For the last kind of differentiation, that having to do with intensity and lack thereof, he prefers "to be white" as an example, snow being more intensely white than ivory, because for him "this only fits notions that are susceptible of more and less" (Avicenna, *Shifāʾ*, *Māqūlāt*, 10). For Ṣadrā, on the contrary, one can be more or less; there are different ways (*naḥw*) of being, some more intense than others: "Acts of being (*al-wujūdāt*) vary in perfection and deficiency in [their] being-existent" (*Asfār*, 6:92).

In his understanding of what makes the primary distinction between realities, Ṣadrā shows again a predilection for elements of *ishrāqī* thought: what is said here calls to mind what Suhrawardī maintains about perfection and deficiency as differentiating the pure Lights of his metaphysical system (see *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, §§125 and 136).

Thus for Ṣadrā, "Acts of being differ [in rank]: the most eminent is the Real, and the lowest ones, first matter, movement, time, and their likes" (*Shawāhid*, 251/298). Except for the most perfect level of being that is limited by nothing, since it is pure being and embraces in its simplicity all perfections, everything that is is limited by what it is not. This limitation is what defines things, and it is as such the origin of their quiddity. Quiddities are thus ways for our minds to express the limits and privation of beings that are not absolutely perfect. In the discussion of what is the object of creation (*jaʿl*), Ṣadrā's answer is again clear: "The being of things (*wujūd al-ashyāʾ*) is the very fact that the things are, not the fact that something else is in them or for them" (*Shawāhid*, 10/15). By saying this, Ṣadrā maintains that things are not quiddities to which being is given, nor essences that exist just by the fact that they are posited, but that what things are (or what is posited in reality by the First Principle) is rather a particular act of being, and nothing else, quiddities arising from the lack of perfection of things, making them "this" or "that."

Existence, the very act of being, is what is in the outside world, and quiddities can only be said to be accidentally, as shadows of the particular acts of beings that actually are (*Shawāhid*, 9–11/13–15). Even if in the analysis of things made by our minds, quiddities can be said to be prior and be qualified by the *concept* of being, what really is outside our minds are particular acts of being.

21.6. THE ONE AND THE MANY (OR: GOD AND THE WORLD)

The process through which what is other than the First Principle, the highest perfection of being, comes to be is expressed by Ṣadrā in a number of ways, not because of a lack of clarity in the thinker's mind, but rather because each approach reveals one aspect of what it is. In some places, this process is expressed in terms of a gradual manifestation of the many perfections of the One, in a model that combines the vocabulary of theophany and that of emanation. But Ṣadrā also uses the language of creation, agency, and causality. In the texts where he does so, the coming to be of what is other than the First is conceived as the effect of a voluntary act of God.

When speaking in terms of a creative act, Ṣadrā insists on its voluntary character, and on the role played by God's knowledge and will in the process. In the *Asfār*, he says: "The existence of the world from the Creator (*bāriʾ*) is not by nature with no positive choice (*ikhtiyār*) on His part, as is the case in the existence of clarity coming from the sun in the air: the Creator acts by choice. His however is a loftier and more sublime kind of choice than what common people imagine" (*Asfār*, 2:216). In the *Shawāhid*, the Creator is also said to be agent by choice: His act is thus not limited to just one direction; it is an act done willingly and consciously (*Shawāhid*, 83/106).

Ṣadrā's account of the process through which what is other than the First Principle comes to be in terms of manifestation owes a lot to Ibn ʿArabī and to the Akbarī tradition both in the vocabulary used and in the structuring of the process itself: this is thus expressed in terms of a theophany, a manifestation of the divine Essence, first within itself, then outward. It is a gradual manifestation of the many aspects of being, unfolding from the One that is all perfection. What this means is that the perfections of being, which exist in the One through one single act of being, come to be gradually on their own. Each act of being reveals fewer aspects of perfection as the movement of manifestation expands: the perfections that exist at a higher level through one act of being come to be at a lower level through many different acts. The lower one gets in the level of perfection, the more multiplicity there is. In the lower material realm, the highest degree of multiplicity is reached, as fragmentation is key to Ṣadrā's concept of materiality.

Ṣadrā adopts the classical distinction of three main realms or spheres of reality: the world of the intellect (the afterworld), the imaginal world (the intermediary, *al-barzakh*), and the sensible world (this material world). "God created being (*khalaqa al-wujūd*) in three realms or three worlds," says Ṣadrā in the *Shawāhid*: "this lower world (*dunyā*), an intermediary world, and an afterworld. Body and bodily accidents belong to this lower world, and their perception is through external sense; the soul and its accidents belong to the intermediary world, and their perception is through internal sense; the intellect and what is intellected by it belong to the afterworld, which is the World of command, and their perception is through the holy intellect" (*Shawāhid*, 225–26/269). These levels of being correspond to each other and mirror each other, the higher levels being the perfection of lower ones, and the lower levels expressions of the higher ones.

As is the case in Akbarī texts, the self-manifestation of the Real is also expressed through the image of emanation or effusion (*fayḍ*). In this model, the "all-pervasive existence" (also called "the Breath of the Merciful") is said to be the first to emanate from the First Cause. It carries the existence of all that is after it, and, accordingly, is the root or foundation of the world (*aṣl al-ʿālam*; see *Shawāhid*, 70/91–92). In fact, what is said here comes close to a number of texts where the God-world relationship is expressed in terms of a creative act, for what this act provides is often described, in line with Ṣadrā's understanding of reality, as the "effusion of the good that is to be (*ifāḍat al-khayr al-wujūdī*)" (*Shawāhid*, 69/91).

In the *Shawāhid* (and in the *Mashāʿir*), Ṣadrā combines the different models in the account he gives of types of actions: besides action by nature, under constraint, under compulsion, in view of a goal, providential, for the good pleasure and assent of the actor (*bi-l-riḍā*), Ṣadrā adds here another type of action, not present in the *Asfār*, action by manifestation, and states that this is the way God acts in creation (*Shawāhid*, 55/73; *Mashāʿir*, §123; see *Asfār*, 2:224).

But if the act of God is *in fine* a manifestation of His perfections, what is the ontological weight of what is other than God? And how is it *other* than God, if everything is being and God is the perfection of being? The problem with a metaphysical perspective based on the participation of all that is in one fundamental reality such as Ṣadrā's, besides avoiding pantheism, is to prevent depriving the world of any substantial reality of its own. In order to avoid pantheism, Ṣadrā affirms repeatedly that if the First is pure perfection of being and, as such, is everything, the First is none of the things in their particularity: "God says: 'He is with you wherever you are' [Qurʾān 57:4], but this is not a mixture, or a penetration, nor inherence, nor union; He is not with anything in its rank, nor in the degree of being, not in time nor in position" (*Shawāhid*, 48/65). In some texts, Ṣadrā uses Ibn ʿArabī's division of being in three main degrees, where the intermediary level of the "unfolding existence," or "Breath of the Merciful," is used to further emphasize the distance between the Real and the dependent acts of being (*Shawāhid*, 70/91–92; see Ibn ʿArabī, *Inshāʾ*, 16–18).

As for the substantial reality of what is other than the Necessary being, this seems to be a main concern for Ṣadrā. His position is not without difficulty, however. A number of texts raise concerns about the keeping of the principle of *tashkīk*. It seems that a major consequence of this principle, namely that there are particular acts of being, and thus real multiplicity in reality, is not always saved, and that Ṣadrā shifts at some point into a different model. While Ṣadrā speaks about the real differentiation between acts of being (as in the following passage: "Being as being without anything added is cause and caused, and the act of being that is cause *is by itself other than* the act of being that is caused, and not through some addition" [*Shawāhid*, 73/95]), other texts seem to reflect another understanding of reality.

Thus, as Ṣadrā points out, strictly speaking, the "Active principle" is agent (*fāʿil*) only vis-à-vis the existing quiddity (that is, the existent seen as a whole, in contrast with the act of being and the quiddity considered in themselves). Regarding being itself, the Principle is rather what makes it subsist (a *muqawwim*), and not an agent, because, Ṣadrā adds, "This being is not separated from itself [that is, the Active principle]" (*Shawāhid*, 79/102).

Another text is even more disquieting regarding the ontological status of particular existences: "What we first understood, according to conventional rules and common usage, and by way of an examination made roughly, that there is in existence 'cause' and 'caused,' leads us finally . . . [to acknowledge] that what is called 'cause' is the foundation, while the 'caused' is one of His modes, and that causality and effectuation go back [*in fine*] to the modulation of the cause in itself and its variation in its [different] varieties, not the separation of something separated in itself from the cause" (*Shawāhid*, 50–51/68). The same thing is stated at the end of the preceding paragraph: "Here multiplicity vanishes. . . . He is the reality, and the rest are His modes; He is the essence, and what is other than Him are His names and attributes; He is the foundation [or root, trunk, *aṣl*], and what is besides Him are His modulations and His ramifications" (*Shawāhid*, 50/67; see also *Asfār*, 2:300–301).

How is this compatible with what Ṣadrā maintains about causality in being, a result of the principle of differentiation of the acts of being by their degree of perfection? One can consider this to be a sign of a tension in Ṣadrā's metaphysics (Rahman 1975, 40–41), or even a contradiction. But one can also read into this the expression of the paradoxical character of Ṣadrā's understanding of reality, where a real preoccupation with the substantial reality of what is other than the First Principle has to come to terms with an equally strong concern for ontological *tawḥīd*, that is, to affirm that only God is—even if this is never stated clearly by Ṣadrā himself.

In order to make sense of what Ṣadrā says in these different texts, one has to consider that Ṣadrā both maintains that the First principle is agent par excellence, cause of everything that is, and urges us to go beyond the causal paradigm, since everything that is is, in its very reality, a dependent act of being (a *wujūd taʿalluqī*; see *Shawāhid*, 108/135, 145/178) that is nothing without reference to the First. But this does not prevent these realities from having an ontological weight, *when considered at their own level of reality*. Ṣadrā insists on several occasions on the importance of maintaining the reality of the world and of its causal order, "the order visible in this sensible world and in the worlds above it, with their various individuals, that differ from each other in species, individualization, ipseity, number . . ., each individual having its own effects and its proper states" (*Asfār*, 2:319), and again a little further: "The multiplicity of intellects, souls, forms, bodies is established" (*Asfār*, 2:322). Nowhere is Ṣadrā more explicit than in this passage of the *Asfār* about human action and being: "The act of Zayd is *really* his, not by way of speaking; and yet at the same time, it is *really* the act of God, just as Zayd's existence belongs *really* to Zayd, and not by way of speaking, while being at the same time one of the modes of the Real" (*Asfār*, 6:374). Both perspectives are thus to be held together. Even if realities are totally dependent on the Real, even if they are only by Him, they still are realities. And there is thus real multiplicity: "What we mean by *reality* is nothing else than that which is the source of an external effect"—as we quoted earlier—"and what we mean by *multiplicity*," adds Ṣadrā, "is nothing but that which implies necessarily numerous statuses and effects" (*Asfār*, 2:319). From the point of view of the Real, one can say that only He is; from the point of view of the particular realities, one can say that they are, and it is only as realities that they manifest one aspect of the perfection of the divine.

Real multiplicity can thus be subsumed in an equally real unity. Everything other than the Necessary by Himself is only real through another that supports its being; considered in itself, or in comparison with the existence of the Necessary being, it is rightly said to disappear. The Necessary One can thus be said to be the only being, since only He can be without any other, while the existence of the rest is due to His act and support, and is thus through Him. Since the act of being that is caused has no other aspect than its very being, since what it is is nothing else than this particular dependent act of being (*Shawāhid*, 145/178; *Asfār*, 1:80), there is nothing left, no residue that would impair the unicity of reality, when, considered in itself, this act of being vanishes in front of the splendor of the Necessary, as the light of the moon disappears when compared to that of the sun (*Tafsīr sūrat Yā Sīn*, in *Tafsīr*, 5:114; see also *Shawāhid*, 50/68, 306/362).

Readers familiar with the texts of Ibn ʿArabī and other authors in his tradition will recognize the Akbarī tone of the paradoxical language of both "yes" and "no," affirmation and negation, pervading Ṣadrā's understanding of reality as expressed in the *Shawāhid*. To "see with both eyes" is a well-known injunction of the Shaykh al-Akbar (see Chittick 1989, 361–81). Ṣadrā makes images and metaphors used by Ibn ʿArabī his own in this context, like that of the numbers and the one: numbers are nothing but the one itself that is repeated, and yet each number has properties and consequences that do not exist in others. It seems that there would be something other than the reunion of ones to explain these differences, and yet there is nothing there but the one that is multiplied; "you keep thus affirming that which you deny, and denying that which you affirm" (*Shawāhid*, 79/101; see Ibn ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 77 and Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ*, 556–57).

There is, however, a specificity of the Ṣadrian discourse in comparison with the Akbarī tradition. This lies in Ṣadrā's particular consideration for the acts of being (*wujūdāt*), more rays of the light of the One than shadows of his clarity, the term "shadow" being used by him more often for quiddities: "All these acts of being that follow each other or make a circle, are like one single act of being in the fact that they are made to subsist by something else, that is the Necessary [being]. He is thus the foundation of (all) acts of being, and what is besides Him are his ramifications; He is the self-subsisting light, and what is besides Him are his rays, while the quiddities are his shadows" (*Shawāhid*, 36/49–50). While the Akbarīs insist on the evanescence of what is other than the Real, Ṣadrā insists that the particular acts of being are realities in their own right, and that it is only as such that they are manifestations of the One. Beings, realities, are lights in themselves, even if these lights disappear when the Light of the Real rises.

21.7. BEING IN THIS WORLD

The lower material world is characterized by change and restlessness. Nature itself is considered by Ṣadrā as the immediate cause of this perpetual change and movement: it is in itself something flowing (*amr sayyāl*), in perpetual flow and transformation. This continuous change is a trait of the world viewed as a whole and of each of the worldly beings. Everything that is in the material world progressively comes to its perfection, unlike the beings of the higher realms of existence. In this gradual accomplishment of what it is, each worldly being remains the same individual in its being and ipseity, but an individual whose reality is a continuous (*ittiṣālī*) reality, no part of matter remaining the same in the process (*Shawāhid*, 100/126).

The world as a whole is also in a process of realization: it is said to have a "gradual mode of being" (*wujūd tadrījī*), meaning it has to gradually get to the highest perfection of its existence. The ultimate goal of the constant movement toward perfection of this world is to bring being from the lowest levels of perfection back to a mode of being that is immaterial, or at least at a level that is the first step toward a higher immaterial realm of being. What is other than the First is thus "first intelligence, then soul, then nature, then matter, and then reverts the other way around, as if turning on itself: first formed body, then plant, then animal endowed with soul, then human being endowed with intellect. Being thus starts with intelligence and ends with he who is intelligent" (*Shawāhid*, 180/220).

Ṣadrā explains how the divine providence does not come to an end: since the chain of simple beings is itself finite and reaches its end with first matter, providence continues with other types of being (*Shawāhid*, 180/220). It thus "decrees the coming to be of composed (beings) that are capable of permanence as species, and originates souls capable of permanence as individual in the afterworld" (*Shawāhid*, 180/220; note the difference in verb used: *anshaʾa* for composed beings, *abdaʿa* for souls destined to become immaterial). What does this mean? We said earlier that what is other than the Real is divided into three main realms, and that these realms, or worlds, correspond to each other. Each reality exists in each realm, but not necessarily with the same properties. One reality thus exists in different planes of reality. In the lower material world, the realities existing at higher levels of reality are present, but due to the deficiency of this world, several individuals correspond here to one species existing in the higher levels of being. Ṣadrā thus supports the existence of some kind of Platonic Ideas (*muthul aflāṭūniyya*), which would correspond, if one understands well what is said here, to the realities existing in God's knowledge. In a passage where Ṣadrā quotes extensively from the *Uthūlūjiyā* (The *Theology of Aristotle*), he explains how his own version is more akin to what is found in that text, and differs from that of Suhrawardī (*Shawāhid*, 154–78/189–216; on Platonic Ideas in the Arabic tradition, see Arnzen 2010).

Starting from the lower world, the movement of perfection is thus the following: there is a progressive accomplishment of one reality, and the many exemplars of this reality in the lower world remain at higher levels of reality, in the hereafter, as species; that is, they return to the single reality they correspond to in the higher planes of reality, or in yet other words, realities of this world can reach a higher level of reality outside of matter, but they cannot do so individually, only as a species. This is for Ṣadrā a sign of the divine providence: their deficiency makes them unable to endure as individuals; thus the divine grace grants them endurance as species (*Shawāhid*, 183/224). But this is not the case for all the beings in this material world: it is so for all except human beings (and perhaps some superior animals, but this remains an unanswered question for Ṣadrā). This is what is alluded to at the end of the passage quoted above: there are souls "capable of permanence as individuals in the afterworld" (*Shawāhid*, 180/220).

21.8. MAN

Humankind is for Ṣadrā the ultimate point of the existence of the world, and everything in this world is oriented toward its achievement. The gradual perfection of this world seen as a whole aims at the return to an intellectual, that is, not material, level of existence, and this is accomplished when a first level of intellection comes to be. More precisely, it is the level of passive intellect that is defined as the last of the corporeal, and the first of the nonmaterial notions (*Shawāhid*, 223/266). This level of perfection, which can be reached only by human beings of all the worldly creatures, is the first step into a higher realm, now outside the material world.

But as the world itself, human beings are in a constant movement toward perfection. They reach the fullness of their humanity step by step and, in this gradual accomplishment of what they are, go through various planes of existence. For Ṣadrā, it is untenable to say that, from the beginning of the existence of a human being, when an individual human soul comes to be for a portion of matter so disposed as to be able to receive such a soul, this would already be a rational and immaterial soul, but whose rational activity would be idle. For him, the human soul is that soul which has the *disposition* to become immaterial, but it is not so from the start (see *Shawāhid*, 186–87/227). Immateriality, that is, the ability to do without matter in one's being and action, comes to be through a gradual perfection in the level of being of the human reality: it is first a material entity that slowly proceeds from materiality to immateriality in a continuous process where individuality is kept. Human soul comes thus to be as a bodily reality—is bodily in its origin—but subsists as a spirit, that is, as immaterial (*Shawāhid*, 221/264). The process through which this happens is a continuing liberation from the constraints and limits of matter. Man is really a man, or in other words, lives fully his humanity, only when he reaches a level of perception that is beyond sensation and estimation: before that, he is "a worm that creeps in the soil," or, less dramatically, an animal just like other animals (see *Shawāhid*, 337–38 and 361–62/395–96 and 422).

"[When] he rises to the world of humanity," says Ṣadrā after defining the lower levels through which the human individual passes in his development, "he perceives things that do not fall under sensation, imagination, or estimation. He is cautious not only regarding the immediate, but also the future. He perceives things that are absent from sensation, imagination, and estimation, and seeks the Hereafter and eternal life. From this point, he deserves really to be called 'human' " (*Shawāhid*, 338/396).

Already in this world, human beings live at various levels of reality, from the physical world to the immaterial higher realms of being. They have, while in this world, the possibility to perform actions and to perceive beyond the limits of materiality. And this is even more so when they reach the higher levels of being after leaving the material world with death.

We saw that for Ṣadrā there are several realms in existence, each with its own properties. Human beings have this peculiarity, that unlike the other beings of this world, they are able to exist in these different planes of reality while keeping their individuality. They thus return (meaning, subsist in the afterlife) as individuals, and not, like other realities of this world, as species.

Another peculiarity of human beings is that they do not have a definite place to return to, nor to stay in (*laysa lahu,* or *lahā* when speaking of human soul, *maqām maʿlūm*). This famous Ṣadrian saying, that echoes the Qurʾānic verse "There is not among us any except that he has a known position" (Qurʾān 37:164), does not seem to be stated as such in the *Shawāhid* (unlike, for instance, the *Asfār*; see 8:343), but the idea of the versatility of human nature is unambiguously present.

This has several important implications, two of which will be mentioned here. First, there is a possibility to go beyond or stay behind human perfection. The gradual coming to be of the perfection of a reality that is not itself circumscribed in one well-defined limit allows for the possibility of thinking that one can go beyond humanity, and become one of the angels, or stay behind humanity, and remain at the level of animals, albeit superior ones. The ultimate goal of human beings is to go from the stage of animal to that of angel, which is the highest perfection that can be reached, and when at the level of the angels, to go from the lower angelic rank to that of the angels that are nearest to God (*Shawāhid*, 340/398). But this is the final perfection of a small number of human beings, as very few have the proper disposition and conditions to reach it: the vast majority of humanity stays behind. Their knowledge and being remain at the level of imagination and estimation, like superior animals (*Shawāhid*, 203/243–44). In the afterlife, the result of one's accomplishment in this world will become visible and affect the way the afterlife is lived. In one passage of the *Asfār*, Ṣadrā insists on the difference between those who are destined to reach the higher levels of human perfection and other men in an impressive way: "It should be known that men as human beings do not have as first or even second perfection to become sages who know God, His kingdom, His signs, and the Last Day. This is not in the natural disposition of most people, but only in the nature of a favored group, who are in reality another species of people, different from the others. For we have alluded to the fact that human beings, according to this first state of being, are one unique species, but according to the state of being of the second nature . . ., they are many species, each with its own perfection and bliss" (*Asfār*, 7:81).

This brings us to the second consequence of the versatility of human perfection. For Ṣadrā, in the afterlife, the human species is no longer unique, as it is in the lower world, but the remarkable variety of accomplishments of human beings results, in the afterlife, in a multiplicity of different species (*Shawāhid*, 223/266, 287/341). In the *Shawāhid*, this idea is presented as a fact, stated without much explanation. Ṣadrā explains how this is possible in the *Asfār*: "Natural human being [that is, human being as a natural being, a being of the world of nature]," says Ṣadrā, "is one unique species, and similarly, human souls, from the point of view of their attached existence [that is, their existence as linked to the material body], are one unique species . . .. But this soul, even if it is the form and perfection of this natural species, is also in itself a substance able to receive forms of various species according to a different [kind] of being, other than the natural" (*Asfār*, 9:19; see also *Sharḥ Uṣūl*, 3:380). In the *Wisdom of the Throne*, souls are said to be "a form of perfection for sensible matter" and at the same time "spiritual matter with the capacity of receiving and being united" with other forms, according to their actions and habits (*ʿArshiyya*, 241; trans. Morris 1981, 145–46). It is these forms that will appear in the hereafter.

21.9. Afterlife

The question of afterlife is treated in the *Shawāhid* chiefly in relation with human destiny. Of special interest for Ṣadrā is the problem of bodily resurrection, to which a separate chapter is devoted (*mashhad* 4). Ṣadrā starts by enumerating a number of principles that ground his understanding of corporeal afterlife (a similar, but not identical, list is found in *Asfār*, 9:185; *Mabdaʾ*, 382; *Tafsīr Sūrat Yā Sīn*, 371). The main positions maintained there have to do with the notions of matter and corporeity, and the understanding of the imaginative faculty as nonmaterial. Matter is not for Ṣadrā a primary factor of individualization: this is guaranteed by the soul that informs this matter and makes it its own. Ṣadrā proposes a definition of corporeity (the quality or state of having or being a body) that is not related to matter understood as that reality made of elements which underlies the existence of the beings of this lower world. Ṣadrā thus dissociates the corporeal from the material and claims that the soul's real body is not the body seen as a "natural composite," the "heavy body" (*Shawāhid*, 88/112), but rather the instrument of its action: it is this latter kind of body that will remain with the soul in the afterlife (*Shawāhid*, 91/115–16).

The principle that states that the individual remains as an identical individual being throughout the incessant process of regeneration of the parts of its body in its growth and decay in this world holds for the passage in the afterlife: the body remains what it is, even if its nature changes, following the continuity of the identity of the soul. It is this approach of the soul's body that emerges from the following passage: "The members of an individual person (*shakhṣ*), like his body (*badan*) as a whole, are in constant transformation, dissolution and flow through (the action) of its innate heat . . ., and [despite this], the individual is identical to himself body and soul, from the beginning to the end of his life. This is due to the fact that the identity of his body is kept by his soul. . . . The fact that the body is this body, a body for this soul, is by this soul, even if the composition of the body is changed. And the same holds for the fact that the members are these members, like this hand or this finger, since all of them keep their identity following the identity of the soul" (*Shawāhid*, 262/312). What dies is the elemental body, the flesh (*Shawāhid*, 288/342), but this does not deprive the soul of a body to use in the afterlife.

Ṣadrā insists on several occasions that the afterlife body is different in many ways from the material body. Thus, for instance, the afterlife body emerges from the soul and reflects its true nature: the souls in the afterlife "create their body, as something they necessitate and that follows them" (*Shawāhid*, 268/318). This corporeal afterlife takes place in another dimension of existence, an intermediary plane of reality defined as being between the physical world and the world of intellects. Human beings who have not reached the highest level of perfection, and are thus unable to be elevated at death to the world of perfectly separated entities, exist neither in the physical world nor in the world of perfect separation: "They exist in a world that is intermediary between material corporeity and intellective detachment" (*Shawāhid*, 267/317). It is in this plane of reality that the soul will build a garden (or hell) for itself. Ṣadrā details the different elements of the afterlife in its Islamic version, such as the passage on the path, or the blowing of the horn, to show that all these are real events, if understood in their own level of reality.

Ṣadrā's understanding of the afterlife is the result of a slow elaboration starting from the idea of an imaginal afterlife sketched by Avicenna in several of his works. Avicenna hinted at the possibility of a sensible, even though not material, afterlife lived by the unperfected yet enduring human souls, since human souls are immaterial by essence for Avicenna. Despite the difficulty of his position, especially because for him the imaginative faculty, like the other internal senses, is a material faculty, Avicenna aimed at establishing a form of imaginal afterlife, where pain and bliss as described in the revelation would be sensed through internal senses, imagination in particular. But Avicenna excluded any kind of bodily resurrection or afterlife body: this would be impossible in his system, and more importantly, this would be superfluous, even in order to understand a sensible afterlife for human souls unable to reach the intellective bliss or to make sense of the descriptions found in revelation, since perception is truly a function of the inner senses (on this see Michot 1986; the understanding of Avicenna's imaginal afterlife outlined here is that followed by Ṣadrā; the proper way to understand what Avicenna says on this question is a matter of discussion among scholars studying Avicenna).

Ṣadrā's idea of an afterlife lived in imagination, or created by the soul's power, is less problematic than Avicenna's, since he conceives imagination as a nonmaterial function of human soul, and since, for him, the nonmaterial is not limited to the intellective. Ṣadrā holds that internal senses are not located in matter: matter is just the condition of the emergence of the first levels of internal perception, but it is not necessary as such for the soul's perception of forms that are beyond the physical world (*Shawāhid*, 197/237). In its various activities, the human soul is constantly ascending and descending in the planes of reality, performing its actions in the physical, intermediate, and, for the most perfect, intellective worlds (see *Shawāhid*, 88/112, 195–96/236, 227–28/271). As for the fact that the immaterial is not limited to the intellective, Ṣadrā maintains that the immaterial is divided into the intellective, which is wholly disengaged from matter and dimensions, and into a world or plane of reality and perception that is disengaged from matter but not from dimensions, which is the proper world of imagination. Souls that are disengaged from external senses and the physical world through death, but that are not disengaged from imagination, live their afterlife in this dimension of reality. As for the souls who are disengaged from imagination, they are "among the ones who are near (God)" (*Shawāhid*, 266/316).

If these points make Ṣadrā's idea of an imaginal afterlife less problematic, his position on imagination yields a different problem, that of the fate of higher animals, which are said precisely to live at the level of imagination and estimation. In the *Shawāhid*, the difficulty is stated but left unresolved (see *Shawāhid*, 90/114: "Concerning the souls of animals, there is another (deeper) secret," and *Shawāhid*, 237/281: "We do not reject that there can be for a number of them a level close to the first levels of humanity").

In his *Muḥaṣṣal*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī pointed to the fact that the discussion on afterlife, and in particular the discussion concerning the possibility and the modality of bodily resurrection, is linked to the conception of what a human being is (or more precisely, what I refer to when I say "I"), of the place of the body in the definition of human nature, and on the body's own nature (*Muḥaṣṣal*, 537). This is clearly what is at stake here. Ṣadrā's eagerness to think an afterlife body, and to give a coherent account of corporeity and perception that fits this understanding of what afterlife is, reflects his conception of human nature. For Ṣadrā, the body, or some form of corporeity, is part of the identity of human beings: human being is body and soul, a "combined reality" (*ḥaqīqa jamʿiyya, Shawāhid*, 366/427). More precisely, what Ṣadrā holds is that the being-a-soul (*nafsiyya*) of the human soul is fundamental to what it is. And being a soul means having a relation with a body or act through a body. "The being-a-soul of the soul is not an accidental relation for its being," says Ṣadrā in the *Wisdom of the Throne*. "No, the being-a-soul of the soul is nothing but the mode of its being. . . . One cannot conceive the soul—so long as it is soul—as having being except for a being such that it is in connection with the body and using its powers, unless it should become transformed in its being and intensified in its substantialization to such a degree that it becomes independent by its own and able to dispense with its connection to the physical body (but not yet to any kind of body)" (*ʿArshiyya*, 238; trans. Morris 1981, 139, slightly modified). The evolution toward perfection is a process that affects body and soul. The *Asfār* provides here again a clarification of what is said in the *Shawāhid*: "The more perfect the soul gets in its mode of existence, the more purified and subtle the body becomes: its junction with the soul is more intense and the union of the two is stronger, to the point that when the intellective mode of being is reached, they become one and the same thing, without any differentiation. Most people think that when the mode of existence of the soul changes from a worldly existence to an afterlife existence, the soul gets rid of the body and remains naked, having thrown away its garment. But this is not the case. They think like this because they believe that the body that the soul governs and manipulates in an essential and primary manner is this inanimate cadaver abandoned after death. But this is not so: . . . the genuine and real body is that body where the light of perception and life flows essentially, not by accident, and this is to the soul like brightness is to the sun. . . . What abstraction in perception means is not that some qualities are cut off while others remain: it means rather a transformation of the mode of being, as a lower, more deficient, mode of being is replaced by a higher, nobler one" (*Asfār*, 9, 98–99).

21.10. PROPHECY AND GUARDIANSHIP

The ideas presented in the fifth and last *mashhad*, on prophecy and guardianship (*walāya*), are less original. What Ṣadrā has to say on these topics is reminiscent of Avicenna, Fārābī, Ghazālī, and others. Ṣadrā uses these authors sometimes word for word, as in the section discussing what are major and minor sins (*Shawāhid*, 371–75/433–36), reproduced for the most part from Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (*K. al-tawba, rukn* 2, 4:17, 19–20). Ṣadrā acknowledges at the end of the section that this is a summary with a few additions of the sayings of "one of the *ʿulamāʾ*s." Other times, Ṣadrā uses his source with some changes, sometimes remarkable, as in his use of Fārābī's *Mabādiʾ arāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* on the characteristics of the leader (*Shawāhid*, 357–59/416–18; Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 15.12–13, 246–49, or *Risālat Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, Ep. 47, 4:129–30, where a similar text is found; there might be another intermediary source). Yet other times, the ideas expressed remind the reader of other authors, or sound familiar, even if no direct quotation or source can be found. Thus the discussion on the practical benefits of religious prescriptions and their division in actions and abstinence thereof evokes the discussion at the end of the Metaphysics of Avicenna's *Shifāʾ* (*Ilāhiyyāt*, 10.3, 444–45).

Two remarks ought to be made here. (1) First, the influence of the authors mentioned is visible in other places of Ṣadrā's oeuvre (for instance, Ṣadrā reproduces portions of Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* on the ethics of the reading of the Qurʾān, and more precisely, on the veils that prevent us from seeing the meaning of the Qurʾān, in his own *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 62–63, reproducing *Iḥyāʾ*, K. ādāb tilāwat al-Qurʾān, bāb 3, 1:284). (2) But also, and more importantly, the ideas that are sometimes expressed in terms reminiscent of other authors or whose source can be traced to others, are endorsed by Ṣadrā, who makes them his own. Whatever their source, they are now part of Ṣadrā's thought. Hence the changes made by Sadrā to fit his own views, as, for instance, in the case of the three properties of prophethood. The ideas developed on the question are familiar and remind us of Avicenna, but also Ghazālī or Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (see Akiti 2004), but they are expressed, in conformity with Ṣadrā's thought, in terms of a perfection in perception and knowledge that implies being in several planes of reality, or several worlds (*Shawāhid*, 340–41/399). Again, the idea that the goal of religious laws is to bring the creatures to God's vicinity, even if it is, in its wording, a reprise from Ghazālī, is definitely congruent with Ṣadrā's views (*Shawāhid*, 372/433; *Iḥyāʾ*, 4:19).

Topics discussed in this chapter include the characteristics of the prophets; their rank in comparison to other men, which they surpass in the three perfections of knowledge, imaginative faculty, and power to set in motion; how they are necessary for the salvation of creatures; and their role in the organization of society, following the human need for association and the inability of individuals to live together in harmony when left to their egoistic inclinations.

Prophets are described as those who lead human beings from the stage of animals to that of angels, by defining rules for their social life, as well as rituals and pious deeds most appropriate to make them reach their ultimate perfection. The benefits and aims of each religiously prescribed practice, such as prayer, almsgiving, and *jihād*, are discussed in detail, as is the distinction between prophets and other divinely inspired men. When discussing the end of prophecy, Ṣadrā insists on its persistence through another mode, namely, the presence of the impeccable imams and of the *mujtahid*s (*Shawāhid*, 377/438).

The discussion on *walāya*, mentioned in the title of the chapter, is rather short: the *walī*, or "legal guardian," is said to be heir of the prophets, and Ṣadrā points to the fact that "heir" is an epithet God uses for himself. None of the two *shāhid*s in which the chapter is divided mentions the word *walāya* in its title, and one might wonder, especially since some manuscripts end with a title "Illumination 10," if the *Shawāhid* was left unfinished by its author. The absence of a closing chapter points to the same conclusion.

21.11. Conclusion

The thought expressed in the *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* is that of a strong mind, animated by a clear understanding of what is. It is remarkable how a small number of key ideas and principles are brought into play by Ṣadrā in his discussion of debated issues. This is particularly visible in those passages where Ṣadrā starts by enumerating fundamental metaphysical principles as a basis for his explanation of a delicate question (*Shawāhid* 118/146; 261/311; simple reference to these same principles can also be found; see *Shawāhid* 168/204; 296/351).

His reasoning may be difficult to follow at times for readers with a narrow (and somehow, unhistorical) understanding of what philosophy is, but Ṣadrā remains a pillar of later Islamic intellectual history, reinterpreting the past of philosophy and speculative mysticism to build an original thought, written in the first person, that presents a way of thinking anchored in an Islamic horizon of meaning.

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CHAPTER 22

THE *SULLAM AL-ʿULŪM* OF (D. 1707) MUḤIBB ALLĀH AL-BIHĀRĪ

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22.1. Introduction

This chapter argues that the *Sullam al-ʿulūm* of Muḥibb Allāh al-Bihārī is a milestone textbook in Arabo-Islamic logic, both in it larger pedagogical aims and insofar as it posits its conceptualizations as significantly foundational for logical operations. This orientation toward conceptualizations seems to have opened up new possible directions in the field of logic on several fronts.

The chapter has three sections. The author and the general nature of his project are introduced in the first section. The structure of the work and its relation to two leading commentaries are discussed in the second section. And a brief assessment of the work's contributions to the field of Arabo-Islamic logic is presented in the last section on the basis of a few examples.

22.2. Muḥibb Allāh al-Bihārī and the *Sullam al-ʿulūm*

Muḥibb Allāh b. ʿAbd Shakūr al-Bihārī, the author of the *Sullam al-ʿulūm*, was a Ḥanafī scholar of eleventh/seventeenth-century north India. Born and raised in Karā, a town among the dependencies of Muḥibb ʿAlī Pūr in Bihār, he began to gain fame for his legal scholarship in the second half of the reign of Awrangzīb (r. 1068/1658–1118/1707). It was very likely that, starting from the 1090s/1680s, he was successively appointed by the emperor as the *qāḍī* of Lucknow, the *qāḍī* of Hyderabad, and then as a private tutor for his grandson Rafīʿ al-Qadr (d. 1124/1712). A year before al-Bihārī's death in 1119/1707, Shāh ʿĀlam (r. 1119/1707–1124/1712) installed him in the *ṣidāra ʿuẓmā* (central ministry) and, shortly thereafter, gave him the title Fāḍil Khān (Ḥasanī, *Nuzha*, 6:257 ff.).

We do not know all that much more about the author's life. He was trained by the celebrated Quṭb al-Dīn al-Sihālawī (d. 1102 or 3/1691 or 1692) and Quṭb al-Dīn Shamsābādī (d. 1121/1709), both of whom were fountainheads of the rationalist tradition of the Farangī Maḥallī scholars of India (Ahmed 2013a; Ḥasanī, *Nuzha*, 6:237 ff.). The focus of al-Bihārī's scholarly production seems to be limited to *uṣūl al-fiqh* and logic/philosophy. In both these disciplines he wrote short treatises and two textbooks, which have had a long career as advanced texts in madrasa education in South Asia. His *Musallam al-thubūt*, which was written in 1109/1698, is a detailed technical exposition of Ḥanafī *uṣūl*, set against the Shāfiʿī tradition, and it contains a heavy dose of *kalām* and logic as a framework for *uṣūlī* hermeneutics. The *Sullam al-ʿulūm*, the subject of this chapter, is a concise, undated work on logic.

The *Sullam* is the first complete Arabic textbook on logic written by an identifiable scholar from South Asia. Between the time of its publication in the late eleventh/seventeenth century and the late thirteenth/nineteenth century, more than ninety commentaries, glosses, and superglosses were written on this work in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu (see Ahmed, forthcoming). From the very beginning, the text was understood to consist of a series of philosophical prompts meant to exercise the future commentator and glossator (Ahmed 2013b). Indeed this intention that the text should serve as a space for diachronic and synchronic philosophical dialectic is revealed in early lines by the author, who wishes his text to be "among *mutūn* like a sun among stars." This admittedly rhetorical statement has been understood by various commentators of the *Sullam* to suggest that al-Bihārī literally wished his work to replace other logic textbooks in the tradition and to become the main, if not the only, focus of commentarial attention. Thus, a celebrated commentary on al-Bihārī's aforementioned statement explains:

> A *matn* is what is hard and difficult and in need of a commentary/opening. [Bihārī's text] is a supplicatory statement. Its meaning is, "Lord, make this *matn* among the composed *mutūn*, with respect to its fame, 'like the sun among stars.'" For when the sun rises, the stars become dim and are not seen, even when they exist. So God granted his prayer and the scholars . . . wrote commentaries on it, so that it came to be widely circulated among the students of the *madāris* . . . and other *mutūn* came to be obscured. (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:14–15)

As alluded to above, perhaps one of the most effective ways in which al-Bihārī was able to guarantee the success of his text for subsequent generations was to deploy a refined and subtle method of stringing together some of the most vexed questions of logic and philosophy (*masāʾil*) into a coherent work. In other words, the *Sullam* can be read both as an internally consistent system/textbook of logic—one in which the author systematically and sequentially stakes his claims in an orderly and organic presentation—and as a list of stand-alone prompts that invite reflection and controversy. Here is an example to substantiate this impression:

> [1] Knowledge is conceptualization. [2] And it is that which is present (*al-ḥāḍir*) for the one who apprehends (*al-mudrik*). [3] The truth is that it is the most apparent of a priori things (*ajlā l-badīhiyyāt*), like light and happiness. [4] Indeed the examination of its reality is very difficult. [5] If it is belief (*iʿtiqād*) in the link [between a subject and predicate in] a truth-bearing statement (*nisba khabariyya*), then it is granting assent (*taṣdīq*) and judgment. [6] Otherwise, it is pure conceptualization. [7] These are necessarily two distinct species [of things] with respect to apprehension (*nawʿān mutabāyinān min al-idrāk*). (Bihārī, *Sullam*, 6–7)

Each of the numbered statements builds upon a preceding claim and is constitutive of an organically complete passage. Yet each statement, divested of any real extended proof, also appears to stand dogmatically for a specific and contested philosophical position. Thus, for example, to reduce knowledge to conceptualization in lemma [1] is to imply that propositions constitute knowledge only insofar as they are conceptualized, not insofar as one grants assent to their predicative truth claims. Indeed granting assent does not constitute apprehension and knowledge at all, as suggested in lemma [7]. These simple statements assert dogmatically and in a fashion unencumbered by proof a philosophical position that had required investigation and explanation in a long and foregoing tradition of debate on the nature of knowledge (see a useful summary in Ajmīrī, *ʿIlm*). Indeed the *manner* in which the claim is made also directly contributes to the continuity of the debate: for the commentators find themselves defending and critiquing a disarmed al-Bihārī, since the expression in lemma [7] (*nawʿān mutabāyinān min al-idrāk*), presumably linked to the claim in lemma [1], is so obtuse that subsequent generations were unsure about what the author meant. Did al-Bihārī intend to say that conceptualization and granting assent are two species of apprehension (and therefore of knowledge) or (what is generally accepted) that they are distinct species because one is apprehension and the other is not? (see e.g., Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:22, who thinks that the reading offered in the translation above is correct and corresponds to the position of the *muḥaqqiqūn*).

As we shall see below, the issue of how to define knowledge had other implications. For example, if to grant assent to the truth of a proposition is to acknowledge its conceptualization (e.g., to grant assent to the truth of "A is B" is nothing more than to recognize the mental object "A-as-B"), then predicative propositions merely offer an analysis (*tafṣīl*) of the existing conceptualization of a known thing and do not themselves count as knowledge. As a commentator explains, "Granting assent is not apprehension [= knowledge], but is a quality [of the one who apprehends] that happens to occur after the apprehension (*kayfiyya ʿāriḍa baʿda l-idrāk*)" (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:22). Therefore, if the task of logic is to prevent errors in reasoning, the first and foremost order of business for it is to serve as a guide for proper conceptualization. As can be expected, therefore, the *Sullam* is deeply invested in a discourse on the objects of knowledge (understood broadly as *taṣawwurāt* and *mafhūmāt*), the subject terms that pick them out, and the implications of correct conceptualizations.

Finally, it is worth noting that the other lemmata presented above also make bold doctrinal claims. For example, to state that knowledge is what is present to the mind is tantamount to adopting a position against a theory of noetics that holds knowledge to be the removal of a hindrance in relation to an object of knowledge, not the obtaining of something new that was not present to the mind before. It is also to argue for one among many contested theories about the nature of knowledge (is knowledge a relation, a quality with a relation, a clairvoyant state, etc.). Again, the claim that the examination of knowledge is very difficult, though knowledge is readily apparent to all, is to assert a patent and disputed position of al-Ghazālī about the possibility of providing a proper definition of knowledge. Each of these statements, asserted as philosophical truths by the *Sullam*, became a distinct site of dispute for commentaries and glosses for at least two hundred years after al-Bihārī's death. The statements, which may be viewed as a string of *masāʾil*, and the dialectic they generated represented an important aspect of a living tradition of philosophy and logic in South Asia. In some ways the *matn* of the *Sullam* may be seen as an abridged and collective system of philosophical stances, some laced with *shukūk* and *jawābat*, and inviting future generations to engage in a similar exercise. (Details for each of the examples and arguments noted above are to be found in al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 34ff.; Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:16ff.; ʿAbd al-ʿAlī, *Sharḥ*, 16ff. See also Ahmed 2013b for a detailed assessment of the *Sullam* as an intentional battleground.)

22.3. The Structure of the *Sullam*

Although the *Sullam* may be considered to be a string of *masāʾil* from one perspective, from another it is a complete textbook on logic that reflects a standard and traditional order of subjects, with only a few deviations (compare, for example, the order of Kātibī's [d. 675/1277] *Shamsiyya*). Yet insofar as the *masāʾil* constitute the building blocks of the system, they lead to two interesting effects for the textbook: (1) a small set of *masāʾil*, such as the one pertaining to the nature of conceptualization and granting assent (noted above), functions as a cohesive undercurrent for the entire presentation, often leading the author back to discuss closely related issues via the perspective of a different section of logic; and (2) the presentation, though generally traditional in its order, is not pedagogically facilitative as a result. In other words, whereas one finds relatively complete and identifiable sections on various parts of logic in Avicenna and Kātibī (cross-references to other parts are of course natural), in the *Sullam*, the treatment of one *masʾala* flows into another set of issues that would fall into an entirely different section in a traditional textbook. It is for this reason perhaps that few parts of the *Sullam* are marked as separate sections. The work seems to flow as a long philosophical argument, undergirded by key philosophical concerns and positions. Take, for instance, the discussion on the quantification of propositions:

> If the subject is a particular (*juzʾī*), the proposition is an individuated (*mushakhkhaṣa*) and singular (*makhṣūṣa*) [type]. If it is a universal, then if a judgment is passed about it without the addition of a condition, then it is indefinite (*muhmala*), according to the ancients. If a judgment is passed, along with the condition of [the subject's] mental unity, then it is a natural (*tabīʿiyya*) [proposition]. And if the judgment in it pertains to its individual instances, then if the quantity of the individual instances is explained in it [i.e., the proposition], then it is quantified (*maḥṣūra wa-musawwara*). . . .[X] Know that the doctrine of the verifiers (*madhhab ahl al-taḥqīq*) is that the judgment in a quantified [proposition] pertains to the reality itself, because it obtains in the mind in reality. [Y] The particulars are known *per accidens* and are not objects of judgment except in this way. [Z] This may give the impression that if things were such, this would require the affirmation of the existence of the reality [referred to in the subject term] in reality. For that of which something is affirmed / that which exists (*muthbat lahu*) is that about which judgment is passed, except that it [i.e., the reality] may be nonexistential, indeed negative. (Bihārī, *Sullam*, 82–83)

Al-Bihārī began this discussion in a generally familiar fashion, by enumerating the different types of propositions with reference to the existence of the quantifier. This led him to discuss the nature of the subject terms of propositions (a topic he engages fully three pages later), with a focus on the question of the real object of propositional knowledge [X, Y]. And it is precisely this question—that is, the real object of knowledge and its relation to extramental existence and particulars—that exercises him and his commentators from the opening lines of the book. It serves as one of the leitmotif *masāʾil* of the text with which the commentaries and glosses obsess on repeated occasions. In the case in question, if that which is known in itself is a reality that obtains in the mind, then the problem of divested and negated subject terms (such as "nonman" and "that which is not living") has to be addressed. Can such subject terms have conceptualizations and, if so, what does granting assent to their predicates mean? As we will see in the examples below, since knowledge is reduced to conceptualization, a range of subject terms that pose similar problems are discussed at various points in the text.

With these general observations about the organization and flow of the text aside, it may be suitable to make some more specific comments about its structure and its commentarial engagements. In the history of Islamic scholarship, commentaries and glosses on central base texts often became not just interpretive windows into them, but, insofar as they served as gateways to this text, they also determined and often severely restricted the subject matters of subsequent discourse (see Ahmed, forthcoming; El-Shamsy 2013; Street, in this volume). The *Sullam* is therefore relatively unique in that most of its commentaries are of the first order, so that the entire text remained a field of exploration. There is no doubt, however, that as certain commentaries gained favor and as the intertextuality of horizontal first-order commentaries matured, certain narrowing effects were indeed felt. Table 22.1 is an ordered list of the topics treated in the

Table 22.1 Comparative Table: The *Sullam* and the Commentaries of Qāḍī Mubārak and Mullā Ḥasan

Sullam	*Qāḍī Mubārak*	*Mullā Ḥasan al-Sihālawī*
Taḥmīd (2,5)	*Taḥmīd* (2–15)	*Taḥmīd* (10–33)
Introduction: knowledge, conceptualization-granting assent, benefit of logic, absolute unknown, subject matter of logic, four hypotheses (6-13)	(15–49)	(33–63)
Conceptualization (13ff.)	(50ff.)	(63ff.)
absolute unknown (13)	(50–51)	(63–66)
signification (13-23)	(50–75)	(66–99)
modulation of being, homonymy, figurative speech (18-22)	(65–75)	(82–99)
compound utterances, propositions (22-3)	(74–75)	(96–99)
liar paradox and self-referential sentences (22-3)	(76–78)	(99–103)
universals and particulars (23-27)	(78–88)	(104–114)
contradiction (27-32)	(88–95)	(114–131)
five types of universals: genus, species, specific difference, property, common accident (32-51)	(96–128)	(al-Sihālawī (MS), 30v-49r)
natural universal (51-58)	(129–143)	(al-Sihālawī, *Sharḥ*, 49r-55r)
definition and description (58- 68)	(144–156)	(al-Sihālawī, *Sharḥ*, 55r-64v)
Granting assent (68ff.)	**Granting assent** (156ff.)	
judgment (69-70)	(156–158)	
propositions , definitions and parts (70-76)	(159–167)	
conditional propositions (76-79)	(167–171)	
problems with contradictories of conditionals (79-81)	(171–175)	
quantification of propositions (81-86)	(175–187)	
subject terms (86-88)	(187–189 (miscounted pagination—194)	

(*continued*)

Table 22.1 (Continued)

Sullam	*Qāḍī Mubārak*	*Mullā Ḥasan al-Sihālawī*
Taḥmīd (2,5)	*Taḥmīd* (2–15)	*Taḥmīd* (10–33)
predication (88-93)	189 (should be 194)–198	
problematic subject terms (91-96)	(198–203)	
predicate terms (97-98)	(204–207)	
propositions with negated predicates (98-99)	(207–211)	
divested propositions (99-100)	(211–212)	
modals and conditionals (100-118)	(212–236)	
implication (118-129)	implication (236–255)	
contradictories of modal propositions (129-136)	(255–263)	
conversions (136-146)	(263–273)	
contradictory conversion (146-148)	(273–277)	
syllogistics (148-168)	(277–300)	
analogy (168-170)	(300)	
demonstration (170-175)	(301–312)	
dialectic (175-176)	(313)	
rhetoric (176-177)	(313–314)	
poetics (177-178)	(314)	
sophistics (178-179)	(314–316)	

Sullam, along with a comparison of the commentarial engagements of two of the leading first-order commentaries (on Mubārak and Ḥasan, see Ahmed 2013b). The lithograph of al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, used for the preparation of the table breaks off at the section beginning with the five universals. The remainder of the commentary is found in a manuscript of Aligarh University, India, and is recorded as "al-Sihālawī, *Sharḥ*" in the bibliography.

It is immediately noticeable that, relative to the *matn*, the most extended engagement of both commentaries is with the *taḥmīd* and *muqaddima*. Both these sections implicitly and explicitly set as a site of dialectical engagement one of the most vexed questions of post-Avicennan philosophy and logic, namely, epistemology and its underlying noetics. In other words, though various standard issues of postclassical logic texts are treated in the *Sullam* (we certainly have parts that deal with the five predicables, the theory of signification, the syllogistic, demonstration, etc.), as noted above, the cohesion of the work can be measured by the consistent engagement with a small set of underlying issues. Knowledge is one such dominant topic. What it is and how logic may or may not deliver it occupies the *Sullam* and the tradition it generated quite heavily.

Parts that follow the *taḥmīd* and *muqaddima*, whether they receive heavy or passing commentary, regularly revert to the issues of epistemology that were set forth in the opening sections. Thus, for example, the parts on the absolute unknown (*majhūl muṭlaq*), the liar paradox (*jidhr aṣamm*), impossible subject terms (*mawḍūʿ mumtaniʿ*), and contradictory/absurd implicants are all concerned with determining the limits and difficulties in defining the proper subject of logical propositions (i.e., *taṣawwurāt* and *mafhūmāt*) and the logical operations that may be valid for them, in view of the general conclusions reached about the nature of knowledge as conceptualization (see comments above and detailed treatment below).

All of the *masāʾil* noted above were treated in various ways in the literature preceding this work (see, e.g., Eichner 2011; Alwishah/Sanson 2009; and El-Rouayheb 2009), and many constituted the subject matter of independent *rasāʾil* well into the early twentieth century (e.g., Muʿīn al-Din Ajmīrī's [d. 1357–59/1938–40] treatise on the natural universal, Khōjā-zāde's [d. 893/1488] treatise on the liar paradox, Gelenbevī's [d. 1205/1790] treatise on the impossible subject term, etc.). In other words, the lemmata are diachronic and synchronic sites of living disputes. In the remainder of this chapter, four topics will be treated in summary form: the nature of knowledge, the absolute unknown, impossible/absurd implicants, and the liar paradox (for detailed treatments, see Ahmed, forthcoming, and Ahmed 2013b).

22.4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE *SULLAM*

22.4.1. *Knowledge*

Al-Bihārī opens the *Sullam* with a praise of God, adding that He cannot be defined or conceptualized (*lā yuḥaddu wa-lā yutaṣawwaru*). In relative terms, this claim of a single line occupied the larger portion of most commentaries on the text. This position, which had a long career in earlier *kalām* texts, is not doctrinally significant for al-Bihārī and his commentators; their focus lies instead on presenting (and contesting) an epistemology within which such a claim could be valid.

One of the earliest extant commentaries on the *Sullam* was written by Qāḍī Mubārak b. Muḥammad Dāʾim (d. 1162/1748), and it draws from the lost self-commentary of al-Bihārī on key passages. In parsing the phrase *lā yuḥaddu*, Mubārak refers the reader back to an explanation in al-Bihārī's self-commentary to the effect that He cannot have a *ḥadd* because He is mentally and extramentally simple. This hint from the author himself was decisive in leading the tradition to treat *ḥadd* in this context as definition and to prove three things: that He is extramentally simple; that this simplicity implies the impossibility of definitional parts; and, for the second assertion to follow, that there is an essential link between extramental and mental existence.

The proof of God's simplicity is not central to the discussion of epistemology, and its details can be dispensed with on this occasion. What is of greater significance is the argument for the link between the mental and extramental instantiation of an essence. For even if one were to grant that God is extramentally simple, this would not necessarily mean that He cannot have mental parts. Such would be the case only if the mental and extramental existences stood in a relation of some kind of correspondence. From this point on, therefore, the discussion centers heavily on knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the relation between the two. The theologically significant point—that God cannot be defined—is lost in the background.

Mubārak states that knowledge is of two types: knowledge of an essence, by means of something that serves as an instrument or mirror for apprehending it, and knowledge of an essence, such that it is directly present to one who apprehends. In the case of the former, a definition may serve as the mediating instrument; however, as noted above, since the correspondence of the mental and extramental instantiations of a thing was not established by proof, the relation of definitional parts to the extramental defined entity remains obscure. In the latter case, the direct knowledge of an entity is itself divided into two types: knowledge by being present and knowledge by obtaining/existing, with the first type referring to self-awareness (in certain cases, self-awareness of one's apprehension of an entity) and the second to the direct knowledge of an entity, without regard to the status of its parts as mirrors or mediating elements for knowledge of that entity.

Now neither the *Sullam* nor its commentaries offers an adequate solution to the possible disjunct between the mental definitional parts and the extramental reality of an entity. This may be because, as one gloss explains, that whereby the knowledge of an entity is mediated and the known entity itself (not the extramental entity) are essentially one and the same, their differentiation existing only insofar as the entity is considered in terms of parts and as a whole (*ijmāl wa-t-tafṣīl*) (ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, 16 n. 37). If this reading implies that the real object of knowledge, whether the part or the whole, is that which is first directly available to the mind, then it makes sense that the discussion should shift to direct knowledge by obtaining/existing. In other words, the texts need not dwell on resolving the issue of the relation of the mediating mental definitional parts to extramental realities, since all they really need to explain is the ontological status of an object directly available to the mind; the definitional parts may simply be taken to be aspects of the consideration of this same entity with a view to its extension into parts. Of course this only shifts the level of the disjunct now to the question of the relation of the immediately available mental forms to the extramental entities. Though this question plagues the *Sullam* tradition and seems to be an underlying motivation for detailed discussions of problematic subject terms, such as "the absolute unknown" and "the impossible," it will not detain us here. Suffice it to say that, just as the relation of the directly accessed mental objects to extramental objects is a focus, so is the issue of how a subject term relates to the *mental* object that it picks out. This latter concern will constitute the topic of discussion below (for a discussion of how some of the commentary/gloss tradition of the *Sullam* eventually adopted a quasi-skeptical hypothesis about the possibility of knowing extramental particulars, see Ahmed 2013b).

22.4.2. *Taṣawwurāt*

As noted above, it is not on an analysis of definition, but on the nature of the conceptualization of mental entities as collective wholes, that the *Sullam* and its commentaries now focus. Indeed issues related to conceptualization become primary foci and running threads through a number of parts of the *Sullam*, since al-Bihārī seems to equate conceptualization with knowledge. Thus he writes:

> Knowledge is conceptualization. And it is that which is present for the one who apprehends (*al-ḥāḍir ʿinda l-mudrik*). . . .There is nothing that impedes conceptualization, for it can be related to anything (*fa-yataʿallaqu bi-kulli shayʾ*). There is a well-known doubt and it is that knowledge and the known are one with respect to their essence (*muttaḥidāni bi-dh-dhāt*). So if we conceptualize granting assent (*idhā taṣawwarnā t-taṣdīq*), then they are one and the same, though you had said that they are different in reality. The solution to this [doubt, a solution] in [offering which] I am unique, is that, in [holding] the position of unity, knowledge is [understood] in the sense of a known form (*al-ʿilm fī masʾalat al-ittiḥād bi-maʿnā l-ṣūra al-ʿilmiyya*). For [this form,] with respect to its obtaining (*al-ḥuṣūl*) in the mind, is that which is known and, with respect to its subsisting *in* the mind (*al-qiyām bihi*), it is knowledge. (Bihārī, *Sullam*, 6–8)

The commentators are exercised by the rather abstruse claims of some of the lemmata. One of the main interpretive roadblocks is how to parse al-Bihārī's statement that knowledge is conceptualization. For this would mean that granting assent is not knowledge, but a subsidiary effect following upon conceptualization. The other significant issue is the equation of knowledge with that which is present for the one who apprehends, that is, the known form. As evident in the quotation above, this would lend further support to the idea that granting assent qualifies as knowledge only insofar as it is conceptualized as a known form. Yet a third point to consider is the assertion that conceptualization can be related to anything at all. Indeed at various junctures of the text, this last possibility forces the *Sullam* to consider forms of conceptualizations that would be potentially problematic as subject terms of logic (such problematic cases will constitute the majority of the discussion to follow in this chapter).

The idea that knowledge is conceptualization and that, by implication, granting assent counts as knowledge only insofar as it is itself conceptualized as a known form is quite lucidly discussed by the commentator Mullā Mubīn Lakhnawi (d. 1225/1810), who writes:

> Conceptualization and granting assent are two species of this apprehension that is called knowledge. This [is the case] if [al-Bihārī's] expression "of apprehension" [in his statement "*humā naw'ān mutabāyinān min al-idrāk*"] is related back to his expression "species." In the case that ["of apprehension"] is related back to his expression "distinct," its meaning is that conceptualization and granting assent are two species distinct with respect to apprehension (*naw'ān mutabāyinān min jihat al-idrāk*), meaning that conceptualization is apprehension and granting assent is not apprehension. Rather [the latter] is a state/quality that happens to occur (*kayfiyya 'āriḍa*) after apprehension. In this case, the position of the author would correspond to the position of the verifiers (*muḥaqqiqīn*), and calling [granting assent] by [the name of] knowledge would be by way of concession (*musāmaḥa*). There is no explicit text [indicating] that granting assent is apprehension, due to the likeliness that his expression "of apprehension" relates back to his expression "distinct." This [position] is aided by the fact that it is more suitable for something to relate back to that which is closer [in a sentence]. (Mubīn, *Mir'āt*, 1:22; see Ahmed 2013b for some reflections on *taḥqīq* and *musāmaḥa*)

Mubīn's own interpretive position is later lost in the text in his confounding vacillation, while some other commentators, such as Mullā Ḥasan al-Sihālawī (d. 1199 or 1209/1784 or 1794), squarely dismiss the possibility of excluding granting assent from the category of knowledge (see Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 39 f.). Between the demonstrated (and perhaps deliberate) ambiguity of the text and the multiple voices of the commentaries, it is rather hard to decide where al-Bihārī stood on this issue, other than that he explicitly denies the claims of those who wish to argue that conceptualization and granting assent are one and the same with respect to the essence. However, as noted above, what one can be certain about is that conceptualization and the subject terms that indicate its object became imposing presences in various parts of the *Sullam* and its commentaries. This is understandable, of course, since the benefit of logic is to produce proper knowledge, and conceptualization may have been taken to be all of it and granting assent its effect.

This brings one to the second point of interest in the quotation from the *Sullam* presented above, namely the relation between knowledge and its object. The *matn* itself offers little more than the following:

> Then after examination, it is known that this form becomes knowledge only because the apprehending state (*al-ḥāla al-idrākiyya*), as an existence impressed [upon the mind], is already mixed in a dependent unified manner [with the form], as the tasting state [is mixed in such a fashion] with things tasted, so as to become a taste-form (*ṣūra dhawqiyya*). (*Sullam*, 8–9)

Various commentators explain that the apprehending state exists in potentiality and becomes a positively invested reality with the unified inherence of the form of the known object in it. As such, insofar as it comes to have this invested reality, it is nothing other than the known form. To put it differently and by way of an analogy offered by the commentator Ḥasan, "[This is like] a lamp that, when it is made to enter dark homes, these latter light up. So the lamp is like the form, and the ray that subsists *in* those homes is on the same station as the apprehending state. The difference between the two cases is that the ray subsists in both the lamp and the homes, whereas the aforementioned state subsists only in the mind" (al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 44–45). None of this can be reduced to saying that the state is essentially the same as the thing informing it, though the two exist as one (*muttaḥid*). Knowledge (or conceptualization) has an analogous relation with its object, as explained above (see Ajmīrī, *ʿIlm*, 6, who writes that this doctrine was also shared by Mīr Zāhid Harawī [d.1101/1689], who is also consistently alluded to at various points in the commentaries and glosses).

In all this, the status of granting assent as knowledge remains contested, as noted above. For example, it is explained that "granting assent is an expression referring to granting permission (*idhʿān*). Granting permission is among the states that happen to occur for the soul after apprehension. So how could the author have made it a part of apprehension? One of them answered that it is by way of concession" (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:21). The implications of this discussion for logic and for the interpretive directions the commentaries and glosses took are intriguing. For if only conceptualization is knowledge, then the project of logic, even in the section on *taṣdīqāt*, would be heavily determined by a focus on the nature of subject terms, and relatively less so on predicative statements, syllogistics, and so on, in the traditional manner. One would also find that, in cases where these latter topics are treated, the point of departure and the angle of analysis would depend more than usual on a discourse on subject terms. And insofar as the object of knowledge is a mental form that is unified with a state of apprehension and insofar as entities are known only *per accidens* via such mental apprehension, the focus on traditional correspondence theories of truth would be marginalized. All of this is true for the *Sullam* and its commentaries.

In the remainder of this chapter, three cases of problematic conceptualizations, as picked out by subject terms, will be considered. All these cases had made repeated appearances in the literature before the *Sullam*, both in larger works and in independent *rasāʾil*. Indeed such prior investments in these topics very likely shaped the *Sullam*'s own project, but we are not in a position to offer a sense of the larger historical trajectories leading up to our text.

22.4.3. *Productive Paradoxes*

At the beginning of the section on *taṣawwurāt*, al-Bihārī writes that he is presenting conceptualization first, because it has natural priority over *taṣdīqāt*. He elaborates on this point by stating that that which is absolutely unknown cannot have any judgment passed on it, because one grants assent to the application of a predicate of a subject. So if the subject itself is unknown, the exercise of passing judgment cannot be performed. This line of thought is the consequence of the truth of the statement, "Passing judgment on the absolutely unknown is impossible," which is itself a judgment on the absolutely unknown and, therefore, paradoxical. The discourse on this conundrum constitutes one of the first sites of investigation of the subject terms of propositions (Bihārī, *Sullam*, 13). Al-Bihārī offers the following statement as a point of departure for the commentators: "Its solution is that it is known essentially and absolutely unknown accidentally. The judgment and its negation are with respect to two considerations. [A more detailed explanation] will come [later]" (Bihārī, *Sullam*, 13).

Can subject terms pick out objects of conceptualization that are absolutely unknown? A number of solutions to the aforementioned paradox are offered in the commentaries. The first states that the correct reading of the *matn* is that the object is known essentially, but unknown by supposition (*bi-l-farḍ*, not *bi-l-ʿaraḍ*). On this reading, then, it is claimed that it is the attribution "absolutely unknown" that is known essentially and in actuality and that to which it is attributed is supposed to fail to obtain in the mind in an absolute fashion. A commentator gives the example of one's knowing Zayd essentially, followed by the supposition that he is a donkey. In such a case the judgment that Zayd is known is with view to a different consideration than the judgment that he is unknown. More precisely and as noted by some commentators, the judgment is specific to the *description* "absolutely unknown" and not about anything that may be picked out by this subject term. Indeed the mind fails to turn to the instances that may fall under the term—and turns only to the term—when the judgment is passed. The problem that persists with this explanation is that the description is taken as a denotation for that which is absolutely unknown and thus becomes a certain aspect whereby the absolutely unknown is in fact known. The solution that the intellect does not turn to the fact of this thing being known by the description "absolutely unknown" begs the prior recognition of the instance as falling under the subject term. The commentators are aware of this difficulty, as it will be shown below (al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 64; Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:52).

Second and in a related explanation, the commentators read the expression as given in the translation above (i.e., *bi-l-ʿaraḍ*). Indeed in this case, the failure of the explanation is even more pronounced. Mubīn writes:

> Its meaning is that it [i.e., "*al-majhūl al-muṭlaq*"] is known essentially, that is, with reference to its sense (*mafhūmihi*), and is unknown accidentally, that is, by the intermediary of something else, that is, that for which this sense happens to occur (*mā yaʿriḍuhu hādha l-mafhūm*). So the intellect knows the "absolutely unknown" by its appellation (*ʿunwān*) and makes this appellation an appellation for a reality that is absolutely unknown, though [this reality] be false and absurd. So it passes judgment on this appellation that obtains in the mind and [also] negates [judgment of it], in its consideration of its negation of the thing to which it applies (*maʿnūn*). So the impossibility [of the judgment] is only with reference to that to which the appellation applies. The appellation is among its accidentals, so that it turns to it accidentally [i.e., not in itself]. (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:52)

This alternative reading hardly resolves the problem, since the appellation is an aspect (*wajh*) whereby the thing is known, though it was granted that it was absolutely unknown. A more suitable solution proposed by the commentators is grounded in the recognition that the core of the paradox really lies in the cycles of alternating truth values that result from the proposition. They imagine the problem as follows. Let us say that Zayd conceptualizes the sense (*mafhūm*) of "absolutely unknown" in some primordial state. Let us also posit that his mind is otherwise empty of all other meanings and concepts. In such a state, are things known or unknown to him? If they are known to him, then they must be known only insofar as they fall under the intension of "absolutely unknown," since his mind is otherwise vacuous. In such a case, "absolutely unknown" would apply truthfully to such known things, so that they would be absolutely unknown. Given this, the truth of the application of "absolutely unknown" to these known things would lead to the truth of these known things being absolutely unknown. In such a case, since these things were posited as known, the truth of the application of "absolutely unknown" for them would lead to its own falsity. The cycle would continue (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:52–53; al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 64 ff.).

As is clear, the aforementioned problem with propositional truth-conditions lies in the conceptualization of a problematic subject; and insofar as conceptualization is the equivalent of knowledge, as noted above, the solution for some of the commentators also lies in a modification in how they parse knowledge. Thus the commentator Mubīn argues that, though a thing may be known by means of an aspect (*wajh*) of it that obtains in the mind, such an aspect must satisfy the condition of disclosing the thing to the knower (on disclosure, see Ahmed 2013b). If it fails to satisfy this condition, then it cannot be considered epistemologically relevant. Since in the present case, there is no other entity at hand that is disclosed to the knowing subject, the "absolutely unknown" cannot be considered an aspect of anything; it can only be known in terms of its intension. Thus, effectively, the commentary tradition is arguing that, even though such terms may constitute an aspect of an entity as appellations, since they reveal nothing other than themselves, they are not epistemologically relevant as subject terms of propositions. In a similar line of thought, Ḥasan writes, "The intellect makes the sense of 'absolutely unknown' an appellation [parsed as "a mirror" by ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, 64 n. 16] for the reality that is absolutely unknown, although [this reality] is absurd. So the judgment is passed about the appellation that obtains in the mind and the negation is with a view to that of which this is an appellation." Setting the terms themselves as the objects of judgments and not as tags referring to individual mental or extramental instances represents an important turn that had interesting reverberations with respect to theories of truth in the related problem of the liar paradox (see below). Such paradoxes in conceptualization and in relation to subject terms also constituted a major theme of logical treatises (see, e.g., Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 53; al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 64; ʿAbd al-Ḥalim's [d. 1285/1868] reference to his *Muʿīn al-ghāʾiṣīn fī radd al-mughāliṭīn*, 64 n. 23).

The problem of the "absolutely unknown" is discussed in a number of other creative ways in the commentaries and glosses, and the topic deserves a full study in its own right. In the interest of tying up this discussion—which ultimately relates to the aforementioned focus on conceptualization—with other parts of the text, one additional explanation ought to be presented here. Ḥasan writes that the solution to this conundrum can also serve to undermine another famous paradox that is presented in the form of a syllogism (his glossator ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm does not miss the opportunity to point out that the root of the paradox is the matter or form of the proposition, not the syllogism, thus ensuring that the reader is led to assess the issue with reference to conceptualization). The paradox is grounded in two a priori premises:

1. Every intension (*mafhūm*), be it actual (*wāqiʿiyyan*) or supposed (*farḍiyyan*), must, without reference to any modalities or conditions (*fī nafs al-amr*), be susceptible to one of two contradictories, such as existence and nonexistence.
2. Every state belonging to a thing, without reference to any modalities or conditions, including any supposition, cannot entail an absurdity, since that which entails an absurdity is necessarily absurd.

With these two premises, Ḥasan constructs the following arguments. Let us suppose the intension "a thing such that, without reference to any modality, its existence entails its nonexistence and vice versa." According to the first premise above, this intension must exist or not exist. If it exists, then, without reference to any modality, it must not exist; and if it does not exist, then it must similarly exist. Insofar as the intension has entailed the absurdity of two contradictories, it stands in violation of the second premise above. The solution offered by Ḥasan is that this intension is nonexistent in itself in actuality (*bi-l-fiʿl*); it exists only due to the supposed entailment of existence by nonexistence and vice versa. In other words, the problem does not exist insofar as the supposition of the intension is concerned; such a supposition can be granted. The paradox emerges when the supposition is placed in relation to the second premise, which militates against the supposition as an extraneous truth-maker (al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 65). It is unclear to what extent Ḥasan and the larger tradition is convinced by this explanation, since it is followed by a number of other articulations of the paradox that seem to be unresolved in the literature (al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 66; Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1: 53; ʿAbd al-ʿAlī, *Sharḥ*, 39 f., where the problem is discussed with reference to the subject terms of quantified propositions and the possibility of their subject terms' picking out individual instances).

The version of the paradox, as just noted, has a marked impact on other problems of logic in later parts of the text. Essentially, it lays bare the question of whether there can be false, impossible, and absurd conceptualizations despite their violation of certain accepted rules, propositions, and (extramental) realities. If so, then conceptualizations such as "a thing such that, without reference to any modality, its existence entails its nonexistence and vice versa" could be granted. Thus, among its various and pervasive articulations, this issue is discussed in a different guise in the parts devoted to conditional propositions. Are the conditional propositions "If Zayd were a donkey, he would bray" and "If five were even, it would be a number" true? (Bihārī, *Sullam*, 77, 120). Citing the Persian philosopher, theologian, and logician al-Dawānī (d. 907/1502), al-Bihārī explains that the falsity of Zayd's being a donkey at all actual times (*fī jamīʿ al-awqāt al-wāqiʿiyya*) does not entail its falsity in all supposed times (*taqdīriyya*), that is, those instances where neither a thing as it is in itself nor a thing insofar as it exists in actuality forces any restrictions on its conceptualization. In such *taqdīrī* cases, then, the braying of Zayd is affirmed without any problems. The commentator Mubīn explains further:

> If a speaker thinks that Zayd is standing—whether this corresponds to the actual or not—and states, "Zayd is standing in my thought," . . . the speaker is not lying in this statement "due to the absence of standing," that is, Zayd's standing "in actuality" . . . rather he would be lying in his statement if he knows that he does not think that [Zayd] is standing and states the opposite of [what he thinks]. So this statement is true, despite the absence of [Zayd's] standing in actuality. Likewise, the conditional proposition is true in reality despite the absence of the consequent in it [i.e., in reality]. (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 2:20–21)

In other words, the truth value of the conditional proposition is made to depend on the entailment of the consequent only in view of the supposed antecedent. The consequent's correspondence to reality is not taken into account; it is only the consistency of the relation of the conceptualization of the antecedent (Zayd-being-donkey) with the consequent (Zayd-braying) that is relevant in determining truth-conditions for such conditional propositions (the conditional proposition is reduced to a relation of two conceptualizations by the grammarians, whose position on the matter reduces to that of the logicians being reported here—see Bihārī, *Sullam*, 76; Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 2:18). This observation now allows al-Bihārī to address implications involving falsities and absurdities in a more general fashion. Thus he writes, "I say that they—and among them is the verifier al-Dawānī—allowed that a thing should imply its contradictory and [even] two contradictories, on the basis of the implication of an absurdity from an absurdity" (Bihārī, *Sullam*, 78). One is therefore taken back to the consideration of the second premise above, which resulted in the paradox related to the conceptualization "a thing such that, without reference to any modality, its existence entails its nonexistence and vice versa." Can one conceptualize *p* if it entails *q* and not-*q*?

Al-Bihārī and his commentators generally accept that such a conceptualization is indeed possible, provided that *p*, insofar as it is an antecedent, conditions the application of the predicate in the consequent. So Mubīn writes,

> " We say that if the condition [i.e., the antecedent]" in the conditional proposition "qualifies the predicate in the consequent," that is, the predicate of this conditional proposition, "the joining of two contradictories would follow" in and of itself . . . in a conditional proposition in which "the antecedent" . . . "entails both," that is, two contradictories entailed by this antecedent. [An example is] our statement, "If nothing were to exist [*thābit*], then Zayd would stand and he would not stand." [This is so because the antecedent is taken to be an absurdity and conditions both contradictory predicates of the consequent.] So the antecedent entails the two contradictories, standing and its nonexistence. (See El-Rouayheb 2009; Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 2:27)

Now Mubīn concedes that the consequents cannot both be true by themselves, that is, as predicative propositions whose truth-value is to be judged with reference to a mental or extramental reality. However, insofar as "standing" and "not standing" are predicates of the consequent and are conditioned by the antecedent, they do not pose a logical fallacy. For "according to the doctrine of the logicians who hold that the judgment [in the conditional proposition] pertains to [the link] between the antecedent [*sharṭ*—the terminology of grammarians is being used] and the consequent [*al-jazāʾ*—again, grammatical terminology is being used], one [consequent] is not the contradictory of the other. Nor indeed does their joining together entail the joining together of contradictories in reality (*fī l-wāqiʿ*)" (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 2:27–28; further discussion of this leitmotif is picked up in the parts on predications and implications in the *Sullam*, 90 ff., 119 ff., and its commentaries/glosses).

In light of the foregoing, it appears that, in contrast to earlier comprehensive logic textbooks, the *Sullam* had taken a reductive approach to the discipline. The function of logic was to deliver knowledge; knowledge was tantamount to conceptualization; and the objects of conceptualizations, including implications grounded in such conceptualizations, could be merely mental and even merely supposed (such as "the being even of the number five"). As such and freed of the necessity of correspondence to any reality, logic could presumably develop as a pure system of internally consistent rules grounded in various types of conceptualizations. (Of course this is not to say that this focus was so overwhelming and mature as to obscure the more traditional discussions or to underlie *all* aspects of the text.)

The full implications of this turn should be studied and weighed with some care (see a first set of case studies in Ahmed, forthcoming). Indeed, that the consequences were rather groundbreaking can be demonstrated by way of the *Sullam*'s and its commentaries'/glosses' engagement with yet another paradox. Al-Bihārī writes,

> A compound [statement] . . . is a proposition if a report (*ḥikāya*) about reality is intended by it. And so it is necessarily described by truth and falsity. The statement of someone that "this statement is a lie" is not a truth-bearing sentence, because a self-referential report is unintelligible (*ghayr maʿqūl*). The truth is that [this sentence can be] taken with all its parts on the side of the subject term. So [in this case,] the relation [between the subject and predicate] is considered as part of a unified totality (*mujmal*) and [the report] is that about which something is reported (*al-muḥkā ʿanhā*). Insofar as [the sentence] is seen as being generated by it [i.e., the relation between the subject and the predicate, the relation] is considered as part of a totality with distinct elements (*tafṣīlan*). [In such a case, the report] is a report [in the traditional sense] . . . this is the irrational prime (*al-jadhr al-aṣamm*). (*Sullam*, 22)

The quotation above posits the rather well-known liar paradox (see Alwishah and Sanson 2009). In essence, the issue is that, with a correspondence theory of truth, a proposition must be either true or false with reference to some reality (*al-wāqiʿ*); in other words, "A is B" is true if A is B *or* it is false if A is not B in mental or extramental reality. Thus the problem with a proposition like "This statement is false" is that if the statement falls in the class of true propositions (i.e., if it is true) in reality, then the predicate "false" must truly apply to it. Now "This statement" is self-referential and is itself parsed as "This statement is false." And so if it is false, then its contradictory, "This statement is true," must be true. This would now parse to " 'This statement is false' is true" and reproduce the truth of "This statement is false." As is obvious, this problem falls in the class of other paradoxes mentioned above, where a particular predicate applied to certain types of subject terms led to its own negation, which, in turn, produced the affirmation of the predicate, and so on (al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 99).

The solution at which al-Bihārī hints, that is, that the proposition must be viewed in two different ways with respect to its subject term, is akin to solutions of the other paradoxes. The main point is that one can understand "This statement is false" either as a propositional or a predicative truth. Though he is not explicit, the solution lies in parsing it in the former way, that is, in one's conceptualization of the nature of the proposition in question (see al-Sihālawī, *Mullā Ḥasan*, 100 f., where he strongly disagrees with al-Bihārī's proposed solution). This hint may well have derived from the Persian philosopher Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) and is more fully elaborated by some commentators, with some important potential consequences in the theory of logical truth. Thus Mubīn writes,

> The best of the later [philosophers], the author of *al-Ufuq al-mubīn*, responds [to al-Dawānī's handling of the conundrum] with something, the gist of which is [the following]. The judgment in the proposition pertains to the *nature* (*ṭabīʿa*) that applies to the individual instances—without regard to the particular aspects of the subject and predicate—not to the instances [themselves], though this judgment applies, by extension, to the instances. Thus the judgment in "This statement of mine, at this time, is false" applies to the *nature* of the statement. And though [this nature] is a reality limited to this specific instance [i.e., this particular statement], the judgment does not pertain to it [i.e., the instance] in itself. The truth and falsity are with respect to what is absolute, which extends [to instances], without regard to the particularities of the subject and the predicate. [In this case,] the [alternating] entailment of truth and falsity is only due to the particularity of the predicate, and [this particularity] is extraneous to the proposition. So from the truth of the proposition, in itself, its falsity is not entailed. And vice versa. [This is entailed] by something other than the proposition [in itself]. (Mubīn, *Mirʾāt*, 1:103)

Effectively, this commentator has elaborated on al-Bihārī's point that, when the predicative proposition is conceptualized in itself, the truth value of any predicate applied to it must be judged with reference to the nature of the proposition itself, not with reference to the individual instances of propositions picked out by this nature. This is the kind of shift in the consideration of subject terms as intensions and natural universals that was noticed in the study of other paradoxes that appeared above. For example, the proposition "The absolutely unknown has no judgment passed on it" is valid and not paradoxical insofar as the subject term is not taken to refer to instances of the absolutely unknown, that is, when the subject term is taken to refer to a natural universal. Similarly, "If five is even, then it is a number" is valid and true insofar as the intension "five-being-even" serves as a condition for the application of the predicate "number" to it in the consequent. In neither of these cases are the absurd individual instances relevant for determining the truth value of the proposition. In the case of the liar paradox, a similar strategy is being deployed: in $p = p$ is false, p is only considered with reference to its nature, that is, its being false, not with reference to its individual instance, "p is false." As such, the predicate "false" does apply truthfully to it and does not lead to a paradox.

The solutions to these various paradoxes seem to be driven by an understanding that the objects of logic are conceptualizations—real or supposed—that populate and determine a system that need only satisfy the condition of consistency. Indeed it appears that rules for propositional truth-conditions are themselves subsumed under this evaluation (see Muṣṭafābādī, *Taḥqīq*, 7), which would be expected to lead to transformations in the ordinary correspondence theory of truth. Thus one of the several independent treatises on the liar paradox written in India and clearly inspired by the *Sullam* tradition articulates the solution in the following fashion:

> I say that "falsity" (*kadhib*) which is an attribute of a report is its recognized meaning (*maʿnāhu sh-shāʾiʿ*). And it is the contradictory of "truth" (*ṣidq*) in the sense that there is a correspondence of the report with that about which there is a report (*muṭābaqat al-ḥikāya li-l-muḥkā ʿanhu*). Falsity in this sense occurs only for a report, not at all for that about which it is a report, because [this latter] is not a report. In the case in question, [falsity] occurs for [that about which there is a report] only because the latter is that whereby is pointed out the very link [between the subject and the predicate] that constitutes the report. In this sense, there is no harm when the link is true and that about which there is a report is false.. . . The statement with which we are concerned is to be set out (*taqdīr*) as " 'This statement of mine is false' is false." Its truth does not adversely affect the falsity of "This statement of mine is false"; indeed it entails it. *Falsity that is the attribute of that about which something is reported—explained as the nonexistence of the correspondence of the real with. . . a reality posited for it* (ʿadam kawn al-wāqiʿ muṭābiqan. . .limā huwa wāqiʿun lahu)—*this usage of falsity is not in its recognized [sense]. The usage of unreal* (al-bāṭil) *is the recognized [sense] in this case. And it stands as the opposite of real* (al-ḥaqq). . . .*If the truth* (ṣidq) *of the link is conceptualized in this case, it converts to the truth of the reality* (al-wāqiʿ), *in the sense of the real* (al-ḥaqq). *Its falsity, in the sense that is its opposite, is not conceptualized.* (Muṣṭafābādī, *Taḥqīq*, 10)

In the spirit of the *Sullam*'s hints and their elaboration in the commentaries, Khalīl al-Raḥmān Muṣṭafābādī (fl. first half of thirteenth/nineteenth century) has taken the decisive step in presenting the truth-conditions of propositions in terms of other conceptualized propositions. In other words, the proposition p, regardless of its content, is tantamount to a reality. It is about this conceptualized reality that other propositions of the system make judgments. Thus the truth of "p is false" depends entirely on the correspondence between the conceptualized reality of p and that which is posited as its reality in the proposition "p is false." In this case, $p = p$ is false. So the judgment about it corresponds to its reality and is, therefore, true.

22.5. CONCLUSIONS

The *Sullam al-ʿulūm* of Muḥibb Allāh al-Bihārī was an immensely popular logic textbook of premodern India and one that continues to be published for South Asian *madāris*. Generally speaking, it reflects the structure and contents of the leading madrasa textbooks, such as al-Kātibī's *Shamsiyya*: it is divided into *taṣawwurāt* and *taṣdīqāt* and, in the following order, discusses knowledge, simple and compound utterances, universals, definitions, propositions, and syllogistics, closing with very short sections on demonstration, rhetoric, and so on. To this extent, the *Sullam* is a rather familiar text.

Yet as evidenced above, a close examination suggests that this comprehensive textbook departed from the earlier tradition in significant ways. For example, though the work may be read cover to cover as an instruction in the discipline of logic, it actually comprises a series of *masāʾil* that served as prompts for philosophical disquisitions in the commentaries and glosses. In other words, the *matn* of the *Sullam* may be considered as a collection of sites posited deliberately to exercise scholars in a diachronic and synchronic system of debate. Thus, various parts of the text, insofar as they comprise *shukūk* and *ajwiba*, may be read independently of the others. Indeed, the *Sullam* did inspire a number of treatises devoted to some of its most intriguing *masāʾil* (e.g., the liar paradox, the absolutely unknown, the natural universal, etc.). Second, the section on knowledge in the opening parts of the *matn*—the parts most heavily engaged by future generations—adopts the position that knowledge is conceptualization. This position, though hotly debated in the subsequent commentaries and glosses, seems to guide the larger logical program of the *Sullam*. Third, once granting assent is reduced to a mere state of the knower, a state that ranges between the gradations of certainty and doubt, the possibility is opened that propositional truth-conditions and rules of implication themselves can be grounded in conceptualizations. Thus, for example, the conceptualization of p = not-p generates the rule "$p \rightarrow$ not-p"; and this, in turn, guarantees the validity of $p \rightarrow$ not-p insofar as it reflects the reality of the conceptualization in itself. Fourth, insofar as the text explores conceptualizations in themselves as subject terms of propositions, the focus on paradoxical conceptualizations ends up constituting a major leitmotif in various parts of the text. Finally and in similar terms, one notices that, at least in two texts (Mubīn and Muṣṭafābādī, *Taḥqīq*), the traditional correspondence theory of truth is extended/provisionally abandoned in favor of a theory that assigns truth value in view of the consistency among propositions within a system. So one noted that "p is false" (where p = p is false) is true, because the *wāqiʿ* is not an individual instance picked out by p, but p itself. In other words, the object to which the claim corresponds is the conceptualized proposition itself. Muṣṭafābādī refers to such truths by the name *al-ḥaqq* (as opposed to *al-ṣidq*).

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CHAPTER 23

AḤMAD AL-MALLAWĪ (D. 1767)

Commentary on the Versification of the Immediate Implications of Hypothetical Propositions

KHALED EL-ROUAYHEB

23.1 Aḥmad al-Mallawī: Life and Works

Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Mallawī was born in 1088/1677 and died at an advanced age in 1181/1767 (Zabīdī, *Muʿjam*, 1:41–43; Jabartī, *ʿAjāʾib*, 1:286–87; Murādī, *Silk*, 1:16–17). The attributive "Mallawī" derives from the middle Egyptian town of Mallawī.[1] It is not clear whether he was born in the town or one of his paternal ancestors had hailed from it. In any case, he studied in Cairo, and there fell under the influence of a number of teachers of Moroccan origin, in particular ʿAbdullāh al-Kinaksī and Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī, both students of the prominent Moroccan theologian and logician al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī (d. 1102/1691). Such scholars gained renown in Egypt as teachers of rational theology and logic, especially the works of the North African Ashʿarī theologian and logician Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (d. 895/1490) with commentaries and glosses by later North African scholars from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (El-Rouayheb 2005). This tradition combined a staunch adherence to Ashʿarī theology with an enthusiasm for formal logic. Sanūsī and his epigones not only wrote numerous works on logic; in their theological and creedal works they regularly cast arguments into the form of categorical or hypothetical syllogisms and helped themselves to other concepts imported from logic, such as "conversion," "contraposition," and "the temporal modality proposition."

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[1] The vocalization "Mullawī," which is common in the secondary literature is thus a mistake (probably deriving from Carl Brockelmann's *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*). In an elegy by the Egyptian poet ʿAbdullāh al-Idkāwī (d. 1184/1770), he is called "Aḥmad al-Malwānī" (see Zabīdī, *Muʿjam* 1: 43). "Malwānī" is another common attributive deriving from the town of Mallawī.

The Indian-born scholar Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791), who settled in Cairo as a young man, bemoaned the enthusiasm for logic among Egyptian scholars and students and the ascendancy of what he called "theologian-logicians" (*al-mutakallimūn al-manāṭiqa*) in the tradition of Sanūsī (Zabīdī, *Itḥāf*, I, 179–80). He traced this state of affairs to incoming scholars from the Maghreb in "the time of the teachers of our teachers," that is, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This would have been scholars such as Kinaksī and Hashtūkī who taught Egyptian students such as Mallawī, whose classes, in turn, were attended by Zabīdī after the latter arrived in Cairo in 1754. Zabīdī's attendance of Mallawī's classes should be seen as primarily a young man's show of respect to a venerable local scholar, for the intellectual interests of Zabīdī and Mallawī did not overlap much. Zabīdī was primarily interested in the so-called traditional (*naqlī*) sciences such as *ḥadīth* and lexicography, and consciously set out to amend what he took to be the neglect of these sciences in Egypt. Mallawī, by contrast, was primarily interested in the rational (*ʿaqlī*) sciences: logic, rational theology, semantics-rhetoric, and syntax. Particularly widely studied in later times were his two commentaries (one long and the other a shorter abridgement) on *al-Sullam al-murawnaq*, an introductory didactic poem on logic by the North African scholar ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī (d. 983/1575); two commentaries (one long and the other an abridgement) on a treatise on metaphor (*istiʿāra*) by Abū l-Qāsim al-Samarqandī (fl. 893/1488); and a gloss on the commentary of the North African scholar ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Makkūdī (d. 808/1405) on *al-Alfiyya,* a classic didactic poem on grammar by Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274).

Apart from his two commentaries on *al-Sullam*, Mallawī left behind the following works on logic (El-Rouayheb 2005, 9–10):

1. A didactic poem, with commentary, on modality propositions (*al-muwajjahāt*) and their conversions and contrapositions
2. A didactic poem, with commentary, on modal syllogisms (*mukhtaliṭāt*)
3. A didactic poem, with commentary, on the immediate inferences (*lawāzim*) of hypothetical propositions (*al-sharṭiyyāt*)
4. A didactic poem, with commentary, on the logical differences that result from understanding the subject of the proposition to have extramental existence (*al-qaḍiyya al-khārijiyya*) or merely supposed existence (*al-qaḍiyya al-ḥaqīqiyya*)
5. A didactic poem, with commentary, on the logical relations that can obtain between two propositions, and between one proposition and the negation of the other
6. A treatise on the logical relations (*nisab*) between modality propositions
7. A treatise showing that all modality reduces to the four notions of necessity and its negation, and perpetuity and its negation
8. A gloss on a commentary by Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1519) on the introductory handbook on logic *Īsāghūjī* by Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1265)
9. A versification of Sanūsī's influential handbook on logic *al-Mukhtaṣar*

The sheer number of these works is striking and makes it understandable why Zabīdī was under the impression that there had been a marked increase in interest in logic in Egypt in the early eighteenth century. No Egyptian scholar prior to Mallawī is known to have left behind a comparable number of works on logic.

Apart from quantity, one may raise the question of the quality of these works. Modern historians writing on logic in Islamic civilization tended until recently to assume that there was little reason to explore the output of later centuries. Two pioneering and influential studies, Ibrahim Madkour's *L'Organon d'Aristote dans le monde arabe* (1934, 2nd ed. 1969) and Nicholas Rescher's *The Development of Arabic Logic* (1964), both presented a narrative according to which an early period of flowering of Arabic logic was followed by many centuries of stagnation or decline. For Madkour, the decline set in already after Avicenna (d. 428/1037). In a short chapter entitled "La logique arabes après Ibn Sīnā," he dismissed the entire post-Avicennan tradition—spanning almost nine centuries—as unoriginal and pedantic. He wrote that Arabic logic became dominated by the literary forms of short handbook (*matn*), commentary (*sharḥ*), and gloss (*ḥāshiya*) and consequently became focused on plodding exposition and irrelevant discussions of stylistic and grammatical points. The few departures from Avicenna that he encountered in his (superficial) perusal of a few later handbooks, such as the recognition of the fourth figure of the syllogism, he decried as wrongheaded (Madkour 1969, 240–48). Rescher's later overview gave a more positive assessment of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially the works of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 675/1277). Yet he too postulated a dramatic decline in quality after around 1300. For Rescher, too, this decline was linked to the domination of the literary forms of handbook, commentary, and gloss. Rescher remarked—accurately—that opposition to the study of logic (*manṭiq*) in Islamic religious circles weakened in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the discipline entered the curricula of Islamic madrasas. Yet this very process proved infelicitous for the future of Arabic logic, he suggested, since logical handbooks henceforth came to be taught in a sterile and stylized manner with emphasis on memorization and uncritical explication. Logic degenerated into "text-centered comment-mongering" and by the sixteenth century at the latest "was dead in Islam as a branch of inquiry" (Rescher 1964, 71–72, 80–82).

It is important to note that neither Madkour nor Rescher was intimately familiar with works from the later centuries that they so confidently dismissed. Rather, they largely inferred the aridity of later works from the prevalence of abridged handbooks, versifications, commentaries, and glosses. The prejudice against these literary forms is certainly not peculiar to them; it runs deep in twentieth-century assessments of "postclassical" Islamic scholarship by both Western and native observers. Nevertheless, historians have begun in recent decades to reconsider this prejudice and to explore later Arabic writings on logic with fresh eyes. The present chapter is a contribution to that task.

In what follows, I discuss the third work from the list of Aḥmad al-Mallawī's logical works given above. It is a rendering into verse of the chapter from Sanūsī's *Epitome of Logic* (*Mukhtaṣar al-manṭiq*) on the immediate implications of conditionals and disjunctions (*lawāzim al-sharṭiyyāt*), along with Mallawī's own prose commentary. The poem was completed in 1106/1694–95 when Mallawī was a mere eighteen years old; the commentary seems to have been written shortly thereafter, though as will be seen below Mallawī had occasion to revisit some parts of the work at a later date. An extant manuscript of Mallawī's work in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul includes autograph annotations and revisions that reflect the author's own later views (see Mallawī, *Lawāzim*). Both the literary form of the work and the fact that Mallawī wrote it in his student days might lead one to expect that it is an unoriginal or popularizing work. In fact, it is an advanced and critical contribution and belies the assumption that Arabic logic had ceased in these late centuries to be a "field of inquiry" and was merely taught in a sterile and uncritical manner.

23.2. The logic of hypotheticals from Avicenna to the post-Avicennian handbooks

Concurrently with the Greco-Arabic translation movement of the ninth and tenth centuries, a school of Arabic philosophers and logicians emerged in Baghdad who saw themselves as heirs to the Alexandrine tradition of Aristotelian studies in late antiquity. (For historical overviews of the development of Arabic logic, see Street 2004 and El-Rouayheb 2011.) The focus of this self-consciously Peripatetic Arabic tradition of logic—represented by figures such as al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), Ibn Zurʿa (d. 398/1008), and Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 435/1043)—was on what is now often called "term logic," that is, categorical propositions (as opposed to conditionals or disjunctions) and on categorical syllogisms (as opposed to inferences from conditional or disjunctive premises). The early Arabic Aristotelians had, to be sure, inherited from the Greek commentators on Aristotle a recognition of some of the basic ideas of Stoic propositional logic, for example the recognition of so-called hypothetical syllogisms: modus ponens, modus tollens, and disjunctive syllogism. Nevertheless, they retained a primary focus on categorical propositions and categorical syllogisms, if for no other reason than that they devoted their attention to writing expositions of and commentaries upon the logical works of Aristotle (supplemented with Porphyry's *Eisagōgē*).

In the course of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, Arabic logic was transformed in important ways. Avicenna's writings on logic enjoyed such esteem and influence that they eventually displaced the writings of Aristotle as the point of departure for logicians in the Islamic world. Two features of Avicenna's logical writings are especially relevant in the present context: First, they exhibit a certain narrowing of focus compared to the early Arabic Aristotelian tradition. Especially in Avicenna's shorter and hugely influential epitome *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt*, a new organizing principle is evident. Logic is concerned, on this account, with general or formal rules for the acquisition of nonevident conceptions (*taṣawwurāt*) by means of definition or description, and the acquisition of nonevident assents (*taṣdīqāt*) by means of inference. This reorientation of the field of logic was even more marked in the post-Avicennan tradition, beginning with the writings of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and Afḍal al-Dīn al-Khūnajī (d. 646/1248). As noted by the fourteenth-century North African historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), a number of books by Aristotle that had traditionally been seen as constituting the logical *Organon* ceased to have a place in this novel scheme of things and dropped out of consideration "as if they had never been": the *Categories* (dealing with substance and the nine highest genera of attributes), the *Sophistici Elenchi* (dealing with fallacies), the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, and the greater parts of the *Posterior Analytics* (dealing with the theory of demonstrative science) and the *Topics* (dealing with dialectic and eristic) (Rosenthal 1958, 3:143). Ibn Khaldūn himself lamented this development, but the resulting narrower view of the scope of *manṭiq* made it much closer to the modern understanding of "logic" than the earlier Peripatetic conception of it as a discipline that covers all the books of the *Organon*.

Second, Avicenna gave much more attention to the logic of conditionals and disjunctions than was usual in the Baghdad school. Especially the book on Syllogism (*Qiyās*) in his monumental *al-Shifāʾ* dealt at great length with this topic (see Shehaby 1973). He took the apparently unprecedented step of "quantifying" conditionals, distinguishing between the universal-affirmative "Always: If P then Q," the particular-affirmative "Sometimes: If P then Q," the universal-negative "Never: If P then Q," and the particular-negative "Sometimes not: If P then Q." He also greatly expanded the treatment of hypothetical syllogisms (*al-qiyās al-sharṭī*). For the early Arabic Aristotelians, "hypothetical syllogisms" had meant a syllogism in which one premise is a conditional or disjunction and the other premise a categorical proposition that affirms or denies one of the parts of the conditional or disjunction, for example:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{If P then Q} \\ \underline{\text{P}} \\ \text{Q} \end{array}$$

Avicenna also recognized and discussed in detail syllogisms in which both premises are conditionals or disjunctions, for example what in the Western logical tradition was called the "wholly hypothetical syllogism":

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{If P then Q} \\ \underline{\text{If Q then R}} \\ \text{If P then R} \end{array}$$

As just mentioned, Avicenna quantified conditionals, and his discussion of such wholly hypothetical syllogisms took into account various moods and figures. The following, for example, is in the first mood of the first figure (corresponding to BARBARA in the mediaeval Latin mnemonic tradition):

Always: If P then Q
Always: If Q then R
Always: If P then R

Again, the post-Avicennan tradition, and especially the works of Khūnajī, further accentuated this tendency in Avicenna. Khūnajī's influential summa of logic *Kashf al-asrār* expanded Avicenna's treatment of hypothetical syllogisms, and also included lengthy discussions of the mutual implications that obtain between various kinds of conditionals and disjunctions, a topic akin to the mediaeval Latin discussion of "consequences" (see El-Rouayheb 2011 and the editor's introduction to Khūnajī, *Kashf*). Khūnajī may, for example, have been the first logician to recognize a version of what are now known as De Morgan's laws:

P or Q ⇒ Not both not-P and not-Q
Not (P or Q) ⇒ Both not-P and not-Q
Not both P and Q ⇒ not-P or not-Q
Both P and Q ⇒ Not (not-P or not-Q)

Khūnajī's short handbook *al-Jumal* came to be widely studied in North Africa in subsequent centuries. Though very short, it was also densely written and managed to cover a great deal of the logic of conditionals. The numerous North African commentators on *al-Jumal* from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in their efforts to unpack the dense epitome, therefore had to delve into the intricacies of conditional logic. Their treatment was synthesized by Sanūsī in the second half of the fifteenth century, both in his own handbook *Mukhtaṣar al-manṭiq* and in his extensive commentary on the *Mukhtaṣar* of the Tunisian scholar Ibn ʿArafa (d. 803/1401).

In the eastern parts of the Islamic world, Khūnajī's *Jumal* was not widely studied. Instead, two other thirteenth-century works became standard handbooks of logic: *Maṭāliʿ al-anwār* by Khūnajī's younger associate Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī (d. 682/1283) and *al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya* by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 675/1277). Urmawī's handbook is a critical epitome of Khūnajī's *Kashf al-asrār*. It covered in some detail the mutual implications of conditionals and disjunctions and the hypothetical syllogism (Taḥtānī, *Lawāmiʿ*, 158–76, 211–42), but there is evidence that after the fourteenth century, those sections of Urmawī's handbook ceased to be studied intensively. The only part that appears to have continued to be the subject of formal instruction was the first part of the handbook covering introductory matters and the acquisition of "conceptions" (*taṣawwurāt*), along with the commentary of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥtānī (d. 766/1365). This was the part that had been glossed by the famous Timurid scholar al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), and his gloss in turn elicited a plethora of superglosses in later centuries (Jurjānī, *Ḥāshiya*; Wisnovsky 2004, 165–66; Mach 1977, nos. 3224–31; Mach and Ormsby 1987, nos. 695–701). The later parts of Urmawī's handbook and Taḥtānī's commentary dealing with topics such as conversion, contraposition, the immediate implications of conditionals and disjunctions, and the modal and hypothetical syllogisms do not seem to have elicited any commentary or gloss after the fourteenth century, a clear indication that these sections—though almost surely still consulted by specialists and advanced students—were rarely studied in a more formal educational setting. This is also confirmed by records of studies. A certificate issued by the Persian philosopher, logician, and theologian Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502) to one of his students states that the student had studied the commentary by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Taḥtānī on Urmawī's *Maṭāliʿ* with the glosses of Jurjānī "from the beginning until the place where the glosses end" (Gūrānī, *Amam*, 105).

Kātibī's *al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya* also covered the mutual implications of conditionals and disjunctions, as well as the hypothetical syllogism, but it did so in a short and summary way when compared to Khūnajī's *Jumal*, Urmawī's *Maṭāliʿ*, or Sanūsī's *Mukhtaṣar* (see Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr*, 138, 160–64). Two later and widely studied eastern handbooks of logic, *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* by the Timurid scholar Taftāzānī (d. 893/1390), and *Sullam al-ʿulūm* by the Mughal scholar Muḥibb Allāh Bihārī (d. 1119/1707), had even less to say about conditional logic than Kātibī's *Shamsiyya.* Taftāzānī's handbook did not include a discussion of the mutual implications of conditionals and disjunctions (see Khabīṣī, *Tadhhīb*; Yazdī, *Ḥāshiya*). Bihārī explicitly dismissed the topic as unimportant (Gōpamāwī, *Sharḥ*, 236).

All of this meant that the logic of conditionals and disjunctions was typically studied in much less depth in the eastern Islamic world than in North Africa. This is emphatically *not* to say that the North African tradition of logic was *in general* more advanced than the eastern Islamic tradition. Eastern logicians dealt in depth with a number of topics that North African logicians tended to treat cursorily or ignore: for example, the subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*) of logic; the division of knowledge into conception and assent (*taṣawwur wa-taṣdīq*); what makes the numerous inquiries of logic one discipline (*jihat al-waḥda*); the apparently paradoxical nature of the principle that one must conceive something before making a judgment about it, since the principle "Everything that is not conceived in any way cannot be the subject of a judgment" seems precisely to be a judgment about what is not conceived (*mabḥath al-majhūl al-muṭlaq*); and the liar paradox (*mughālaṭat al-jadhr al-aṣamm*). The eastern and North African traditions of Arabic logic—though both in a broad sense "post-Avicennan"—simply developed different emphases, and neither tradition can straightforwardly be said to have been more sophisticated or dynamic than the other. What can be said is that for later North African logicians, logic was—as it had been for Khūnajī, Kātibī, and Urmawī in the thirteenth century—to a large extent a discipline in which one systematically discusses the relative strengths, conversions, and contrapositions of modality propositions, the mutual implications of conditionals and disjunctions, and the formal syllogism (including modal and hypothetical syllogisms). Eastern logicians after the fourteenth century tended to be more interested in semantic, metaphysical, and epistemological problems raised by the sections in their logic handbooks dealing with preliminary matters, the five universals, definitions, and propositions. The contrast can be brought out by comparing the glosses on Quṭb al-Dīn's commentary on Kātibī's *Shamsiyya* by the eastern scholars ʿIṣām al-Dīn Isfarāyinī (d. 944/1537) and ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm Siyālkūtī (d. 1067/1657) with the gloss on Sanūsī's commentary on his own *Mukhtaṣar* by the Moroccan al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī (d. 1102/1691). The three glosses are of comparable length. In the case of the two eastern glosses, well over half of the total (around 60 percent) is devoted to discussing the part of the handbook dealing with introductory matters, the five universals, and definition. In Yūsī's gloss the proportion is only around a third. In the two eastern glosses, the lion's share of the remainder is devoted to discussions of propositions, and only a little over a tenth (13–14 percent) deals with contradiction, conversion, contraposition, the immediate implications of conditionals and disjunctions, and the syllogism. In Yūsī's gloss, around 40 percent of the entire work is devoted to such formal implications (see Isfarāyinī, *Ḥāshiya;* Siyālkūtī, *Ḥāshiya*; Yūsī, *Nafāʾis*).

23.3. Hypothetical propositions and their immediate implications according to Sanūsī and Mallawī

Since Mallawī's poem is a versification of a chapter from Sanūsī's handbook, it will be helpful to give an overview of that chapter while indicating some of the points on which Mallawī questioned or modified or departed from Sanūsī's views. I will not attempt to trace systematically the ways in which Sanūsī's presentation in turn relates to earlier work, since this cannot be done adequately within the confines of a single chapter, and in any case later North African logicians appear not to have been directly familiar with such earlier discussions. Mallawī, for example, clearly did not engage directly with the longer works of thirteenth-century logicians such as Khūnajī, Kātibī, and Ṭūsī; his point of departure was rather the various works of Sanūsī supplemented with the gloss of Yūsī. (He was also familiar with Kātibī's *Shamsiyya* and Taftāzānī's *Tahdhīb* and some of the commentaries on these, but these works had, as already indicated, little to say about the immediate implications of conditionals and disjunctions.)

I will also not attempt to give a systematic interpretation of these North African discussions in terms of modern logic. In other words, I shall not attempt to construct a "semantics" that would capture in modern terms a logical system implicit in these premodern discussions. Rather, I shall attempt to give a presentation that remains close to the language of the authors I discuss, and the main points that I shall try to make are more strictly historical: that North African logicians—and in particular the circle of Yūsī and his students—were keenly interested in conditional logic at a time when such interest had waned in the eastern parts of the Islamic world; that the literary forms of didactic poem, commentary, and gloss did not preclude critical and original insights; and that the concepts of "verification" (*taḥqīq*) and "divine inspiration" (*fatḥ*) were readily available to scholars in this tradition who wished to depart from or go beyond received views.

Before proceeding, a few background comments about the treatment of conditionals and disjunctions in the post-Avicennan tradition are in order (the following is based on Taḥtānī, *Taḥrīr*, 110–18 and Sanūsī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 29–34, 56–58). By "conditional" (*sharṭiyya muttaṣila*) is meant a proposition of the form "If . . . then . . ." By a "disjunction" (*sharṭiyya munfaṣila*) is meant a proposition of the form "Either . . . or . . ." Conditionals and disjunctions were jointly referred to as "hypothetical propositions" (*sharṭiyyāt*) as opposed to "categorical propositions" (*ḥamliyyāt*) in which a predicate term is predicated of a subject term (for example "Every human is an animal"). Conditionals were divided into "implicative" (*luzūmī*) and "coincidental" (*ittifāqī*). Implicative conditionals assert that there is a causal or conceptual relationship between antecedent and consequent that underlies the truth of the conditional, for example, "If this is a triangle then it has three sides." A coincidental conditional is true merely because its antecedent and consequent are both true without any discernible causal or conceptual relation, for example, "If humans speak then dogs bark." Disjunctions were divided into three subtypes:

1. Exhaustive (*māniʿat khuluw*), which asserts that at least one of the disjuncts is true, i.e., the disjuncts are not both false. This corresponds to what would normally be understood by the word "disjunction" in English.
2. Exclusive (*māniʿat jamʿ*), which asserts that at most one of the disjuncts is true, i.e., the disjuncts are not both true. This corresponds to a negated conjunction.
3. Strict (*ḥaqīqiyya*), which is both exhaustive and exclusive. This would correspond to what is now often called an exclusive disjunction, though in what follows the term "strict disjunction" will be used and "exclusive disjunction" will be reserved for the preceding type of disjunction.

Like conditionals, disjunctions were divided into "coincidental" (*ittifāqī*) and "oppositional" (*ʿinādī*); in the latter case, there is a conceptual or causal relation between the truth values of the two disjuncts that rules out both being true or both being false.[2]

Conditionals and disjunctions were "quantified." As indicated above, the quantifiers were as follows:

Universal-affirmative: "Always" (*kullamā*)
Particular affirmative: "It may be" (*qad yakūnu*)
Universal-negative: "Never" (*laysa al-battata*)
Particular-negative: "It may not be" (*qad lā yakūnu*)

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[2] This implies that disjunctions of the *ʿinādī* type were not thought to be truth-functional. This should be kept in mind when the terms "disjunction" and "negated conjunction" occur in what follows.

A universal-affirmative conditional states that the antecedent implies the consequent always, that is, in *all* situations (*awḍāʿ* or *aḥwāl*) compatible with the antecedent. An example would be "Always: If this is a triangle then it has three sides." A particular-affirmative conditional states that the antecedent implies the consequent in *some* situations compatible with the antecedent, for example, "Sometimes: If something is a human then it is literate." The universal-negative conditional is the negation of the particular-affirmative, for example "Never: If something is a donkey then it is literate." The particular-negative is the negation of the universal-affirmative, for example "Sometimes not: If something is a geometric figure then it has three sides."

The concepts of "more general" (*aʿamm*) and "more specific" (*akhaṣṣ*) played an important role in the discussion of conditionals in the post-Avicennan tradition. A proposition P is "more specific" than another proposition Q (and Q "more general" than P) when P's truth implies Q's truth, but not vice versa. For example, the proposition "This is a human" is "more specific" than the proposition "This is an animal" since "This is human" entails "This is an animal" but not vice versa. The universal-affirmative conditional is also "more specific" than the particular-affirmative conditional since "Always: If P then Q" implies "It may be: If P then Q," but not vice versa. Yet another example would be the relation of a conjunction of propositions to its individual conjuncts: A conjunction of two propositions is "more specific" than each proposition individually since the conjunction implies each conjunct but not vice versa. For example, "It is sunny and it is windy" implies "It is sunny" but not vice versa. Conversely, the negation of the "more general" (for example "It is not sunny") implies the negation of the "more specific" ("It is not sunny and windy"), but not vice versa.

The immediate implications of conditionals and disjunctions presented in Sanūsī's handbook (Sanūsī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 82–88) are given in table 23.1.[3]

Space does not permit a detailed presentation of every one of these consequences and the proofs given for each by Sanūsī in his commentary. Nor is there space to cover all of Mallawī's own discussions of these consequences. Instead, I will discuss three cases in which Mallawī noted a problem with Sanūsī's view, dissented from it, or explored further consequences not given by his sources. It should be noted that such examples are not exceptional and that numerous others could have been given. It should also be noted that even when Mallawī agreed with the consequence presented by Sanūsī, he often

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[3] I have tried to keep the symbolism minimal and self-explanatory, but just to be sure: The symbol ⇒ stands for "entails," and the symbol ⇏ stands for "does not entail." The capital letters P, Q, and R are propositional variables standing for arbitrary propositions (such as "Every human is an animal" or "It is sunny"), whereas the capital letters A, B, and C are term variables standing for arbitrary terms (such as "human," "animal," or "sunny"). Brackets are used to disambiguate complex sentences; for example, the sentence "Either P or Q & R" is ambiguous, whereas "Either P or (Q & R)" makes it clear that the proposition has the overall form of a disjunction between P on the one hand and Q & R on the other. A semicolon (;) is used to separate independent propositions; for example, the semicolon in (1.1) indicates that two separate propositions are entailed by what is to the left of the ⇒. I have used the symbol & to render the extensional (or truth-functional) conjunction, i.e., a conjunction whose truth is determined entirely by the truth of its conjuncts. I use "and" for intensional (or non-truth-functional) conjunctions, as in the case of the exclusive disjunction of the "oppositional" (*ʿinādī*) type.

Table 23.1 The Immediate Implications of Conditionals and Disjunctions

1.1	If P then (Q & R) ⇒ If P then Q; If P then R
1.2	If (P & Q) then R ⇏ If P then R; If Q then R
1.3	P & (Q & R) ⇒ P & Q; P & R (P & Q) & R ⇒ P & R; Q & R
1.4	P or (Q & R) ⇒ P or Q; P or R (P & Q) or R ⇒ P or R; Q or R
1.5	Not both P and (Q & R) ⇏ Not both P and Q; Not both P and R Not both (P & Q) and R ⇏ Not both P and R; Not both Q and R
1.6.1	Not: if P then (Q & R) ⇏ Not: if P then Q; Not: If P then R
1.6.2	Not: if (P & Q) then R ⇒ Not: If P then R; Not: if Q then R
1.6.3	Not: P and (Q & R) ⇏ Not: P and Q; Not: P and R Not: (P & Q) and R ⇏ Not: P and R; Not: Q and R
1.6.4	Not: P or (Q & R) ⇏ Not: P or Q; Not: P or R Not: (P & Q) or R ⇏ Not: P or R; Not: Q or R
1.6.5	Both P and (Q & R) ⇒ Both P and Q; Both P and R Both (P & Q) and R ⇒ Both P and R; Both Q and R
2	If P then Q ⇒ Not: If P then not-Q Not: If P then Q ⇒ If P then not-Q
3.1	If P then Q ⇒ Not both P and not-Q
3.2	If P then Q ⇒ Either not-P or Q
3.3	Not both P and Q ⇒ If P then not-Q; If Q then not-P Either P or Q ⇒ If not-P then Q; If not-Q then P
4	(Either P or Q) & (Not both P and Q) ⇒ If not-P then Q; If not-Q then P; If P then not-Q; If Q then not-P
5.1	If P then Q ⇒ Not: not both P and Q If P then Q ⇒ Not: Either P or Q (Not both P and Q) & (Not: Either P or Q) ⇒ Not: If P then Q; Not: If Q then P (Either P or Q) & (Not: not both P and Q) ⇒ Not: If P then Q; Not: If Q then P
5.2	Not: If P then Q ⇏ Not both P and Q Not: If P then Q ⇏ Either P or Q Not: not both P and Q ⇏ If P then Q Not: not both P and Q ⇏ Either P or Q Not: either P or Q ⇏ If P then Q Not: either P or Q ⇏ Not both P or Q
6	Not both P and Q ⇒ Either not-P or not-Q Either P or Q ⇒ Not both not-P and not-Q
7.1	Always: If Some A is B then Q ⇒ Always: If Every A is B then Q

(*continued*)

Table 23.1 (Continued)

7.2	Always: If P then Every A is B ⇒ Always: If P then Some A is B
7.3	Sometimes not: If Every A is B then Q ⇒ Sometimes not: If Some A is B then Q Sometimes not: If P then Some A is B ⇒ Sometimes not: If P then Every A is B
7.4	Sometimes: If Every A is B then Q ⇒ Sometimes: If Some A is B then Q Sometimes: If P then Every A is B ⇒ Sometimes: If P then Some A is B
7.5	Never: if Some A is B then Q ⇒ Never: If Every A is B then Q Never: If P then Some A is B ⇒ Never: If P then Every A is B

supplemented Sanūsī's proofs with his own or discussed and defused possible objections. It is only in a minority of cases that Mallawī was content with simply reiterating and explicating Sanūsī's position.

23.3.1. Case 1

According to principle 1.6.2 (see table 23.1), a negative implicative conditional is such that a conjunction in its antecedent implies a conjunction of negative conditionals, in other words:

> Not: if (P & Q) then R ⇒ Not: If P then R; Not: if Q then R

Sanūsī gave the following justification of the principle: If P did imply R then P & Q would imply R as well. P is a "more general" (or weaker) claim than P & Q, and if R were to follow from the "more general" (or weaker) claim P, then it would also follow from the "more specific" (or stronger) claim P & Q. Since P & Q do not in fact imply R, then P does not imply R either. The general principle here, according to Sanūsī, is that what does not follow from the "more specific" also does not follow from the "more general" (*kullu mā lā yalzamu l-akhaṣṣa lā yalzamu l-aʿamma*) (Sanūsī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 84).

Sanūsī's claim has a certain intuitive appeal, but Mallawī noted a problem with it: It contradicts another principle that Sanūsī defended. In his discussion of principle 1.2, Sanūsī had discussed the claim that a conditional of the form "If (P & Q) then R" does not entail "If P then R" and "If Q then R." Sanūsī noted that in one sense this is unobjectionable: It may be that the consequent R only follows from the conjunction but not from each conjunct separately. For example, "This is a valid prayer" follows from the conjunction of a number of conditions, "This is preceded by intention & is undertaken in a state of ritual purity, etc.," but not from any conjunct taken separately. But Sanūsī went on to propose that the principle only applies to universal-affirmative conditionals. As for particular-affirmative conditionals, a conjunctive antecedent *does* imply a conjunction of conditionals. From a conditional of the form "It may be: If (P & Q) then R" it follows that "It may be: If P then R" and "It may be: If Q then R." He proved this by adding to the original conditional "It may be: If (P & Q) then R" the evident axiom "Always: If (P & Q) then P" and derived from the two propositions the desired conditional by a third-figure hypothetical syllogism:

Always: If (P & Q) then P	Axiomatic
It may be: If (P & Q) then R	Original assumption
It may be: If P then R	by 3rd figure (DISAMIS)

Sanūsī wrote that Khūnajī's *Jumal* and Ibn ʿArafa's *Mukhtaṣar* had simply stated principle 1.2 without any qualification but that this is not strictly accurate and that "the verified position" (*al-taḥqīq*) is what he had just shown (Sanūsī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 83).

Mallawī noted that according to Sanūsī's amendment of 1.2 the following inference is valid:

It may be: If this is an animal & a laugher then it is an animal & rational

It may be: If this is an animal then it is an animal & rational

Yet, according to principle 1.6.2 the contradictory conditional is derivable:

Never: if this is an animal & a brayer then this is an animal & rational

Never: If this is an animal then this is an animal & rational

Therefore, either the principle expounded here (1.6.2) is false or the previously expounded principle (Sanūsī's amendment to 1.2) is false. In Mallawī's words:

> I say: the implication of their rule is the truth of . . . "Never: If this is an animal then it is rational and an animal." They have another rule that implies the truth of its contradictory, for it has been mentioned previously that the particular-affirmative conditional entails as many conditionals as there are conjuncts in its antecedent. For example, "It may be: If this is laughing and an animal then it is a rational and an animal" entails "It may be: if this is an animal then it is a rational and an animal," which is the contradictory. So either the first proposition is true and the second rule is invalidated or the second proposition is true and the first rule is invalidated. (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fol. 16a)

Mallawī did not pursue the matter further in this particular context (though as will be seen below he returned to this point later). The Moroccan scholar Ibn Yaʿqūb al-Wallālī (d. 1128/1716), a student of al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī who wrote a commentary on Sanūsī's *Mukhtaṣar*, stated that principle 1.6.2 should be rejected as it stands. He pointed out that claiming that something *never* follows from the "more specific" is not to claim that it *never* follows from the "more general." It is, for example, true that "Never: If this is an animal & rational then it is a horse" but false that "Never: If this is an animal then it is a horse." All that follows is "Possibly not: If this is an animal then it is a horse." Ibn Yaʿqūb wrote:

> Here there is an issue, and this is that the negation of entailment by the conjunctive whole only implies the universal negation of entailment by each part of the whole if each part is equivalent in extension to the whole. . . . If, on the other hand, the part is more general, then the negation of entailment by the whole does not imply the negation of entailment by the part that is more general. This is because the more general may imply two contradictories from the perspective of different specifications. Do you not see that "animal" implies "horse" when it [i.e., "animal"] is further specified by "neighing" and implies the denial of "horse" when it is further specified by "rational"? On this account, it is not true that the universal-negative conditional entails as many universal-negative conditionals as there are conjuncts in its antecedent. . . . I have not seen anyone make this point (*lam ara man nabbaha ʿalā hādhā l-baḥthi hāhunā*). Yes, negating entailment by the more specific implies negating entailment by the more general insofar as the general is present in the specific. But this only implies the particular-negative conditional, not the universal-negative conditional with which we are concerned here. Consider this. (Ibn Yaʿqūb, *Lawāmiʿ*, fol. 59a)

23.3.2. Case 2

One of the sub-principles presented under principle 5.1 is that an affirmative conditional entails a negative disjunction (both exhaustive and exclusive) consisting of the antecedent and consequent:

> If P then Q ⇒ Not: Not both P and Q
> If P then Q ⇒ Not: Either P or Q

Yūsī and Ibn Yaʿqūb both accepted Sanūsī's claim here (Yūsī, *Nafāʾis*, fols. 123a–130b; Ibn Yaʿqūb, *Lawāmiʿ*, fols. 62a–b). Mallawī did so as well in the original version of his commentary. But in a marginal comment, he repudiated the principles, phrasing his dissent thus:

> I say: the correct position is that the affirmative-universal conditional does not entail the negative-universal disjunction. This is because the consequent [of the conditional] may be more general than the antecedent, in which case it would not be true to negate universally the opposition between them. Rather, a partial opposition obtains between them since there must be a partial opposition between the more specific and the more general. For example, it is true that "Always: If something is a human then it is an animal" but false that "Never: Either something is a human or an animal," regardless of whether we take the disjunction to be exhaustive, exclusive, or strict, since its contradictory is true, namely, "It may be: Either something is a human or an animal." (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fol. 26a)

In other words, Mallawī's counterexamples are as follows:

Always: If this is a human then it is an animal	TRUE
Never: Not both this is a human and it is an animal	FALSE
Always: if this is a human then it is animal	TRUE
Never: Either this is a human or it is an animal	FALSE

The initial conditional is evidently true, but both disjunctions are false since their contradictories are true:

Sometimes: Not both this is a human and it is an animal

Sometimes: Either this is a human or it is an animal

Mallawī did not spell out why he considered these particular-affirmative disjunctions to be true. He merely wrote that in the initial conditional the consequent is "more general" than the antecedent and there must be a partial opposition (*ʿinād juzʾī*) between the "more general" and the "more specific." It is possible, however, to flesh out Mallawī's point. One can derive the two particular-affirmative disjunctions using principles expounded by Sanūsī himself. It is evident that "Always: If something is an animal then it is human" is false and hence its contradictory must be true: "It may not be: If something is an animal then it is a human." By principle 2, this entails "It may be: If something is an animal then it is not a human." This, by principles 3.1 and 3.2, entails the two particular-affirmative disjunctions that Mallawī considered to be true.

In the original version of his work, Mallawī explored other negative disjunctions that follow from an affirmative conditional (some of these rely on principles such as 5.1 that he later repudiated) (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, 26a–26b). In this context, he made a distinction between various senses of the negative disjunction:

1. A negation of the standard affirmative disjunction. In other words, the negation of "Either P or Q" and of "Not both P and Q" respectively.
2. A negation of the affirmative disjunction in the "specific sense." Sanūsī had explained that in the "specific" sense, an exhaustive disjunction asserts that the disjuncts cannot both be false *but can both be true*, i.e., "Either P or Q (and Not: not both P and Q)." Similarly, he explained that an exclusive disjunction in the "specific" sense asserts that the disjuncts cannot both be true *but can both be false*, i.e., "Not both P and Q (and Not: Either P or Q)." On this account, the negation of the specific sense would be:

   Not: [(Either P or Q) & (Not: not both P and Q)]

   Not: [(Not both P and Q) & (Not: Either P or Q)]
3. Mallawī also presented a third sense of the negative disjunction, which he derived from the commentary by the Ottoman Turkish scholar Meḥmed Fenārī (d. 834/

> 1431) on Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī's introductory handbook *Īsāghūjī* (see Fenārī, *Sharḥ*, 15). According to this sense, the negative exhaustive disjunction negates the affirmative exhaustive disjunction but affirms the exclusive disjunction. Similarly, the negative exclusive disjunction negates the affirmative exclusive disjunction but affirms the exhaustive disjunction. The negative strict disjunction would negate both the exhaustive and the exclusive disjunction. In this sense, the negative disjunctions look like this:
>
> Negative exhaustive: (Not: Either P or Q) & (Not both P and Q)
> Negative exclusive: (Not: Not both P and Q) & (Either P or Q)
> Negative strict: (Not: Either P or Q) & (Not: Not both P and Q)

Mallawī then presented some further negative disjunctions in these various senses that follow from the affirmative conditional. An affirmative conditional, he stated, entails two negative strict disjunctions in the third sense consisting respectively of the two parts of the conditional and of their negations. In other words:[4]

1. If P then Q
   (Not: Either P or Q) & (Not: Not both P and Q)
2. If P then Q
   (Not: Not both not-P and not-Q) & (Not: Not both not-P and not-Q)

Mallawī added that the affirmative conditional also entails the negation of the exhaustive disjunction (in this third sense) consisting of the antecedent and the negation of the consequent. He restricted the claim to the case in which the consequent is "more general" than the antecedent:[5]

3. If P then Q & Not: If Q then P
   (Not: Either P or not-Q) & (Not both P and not-Q)

He also claimed that the affirmative conditional in which the consequent is "more general" than the antecedent entails a negative exclusive disjunction in the third sense consisting of the consequent and the negation of the antecedent:[6]

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[4] By principle 5.1, "If P then Q" entails "Not: Either P or Q" and "Not: Not both P and Q." By principle 6, these two negative disjunctions entail respectively "Not: Not both not-P and not-Q" and "Not: Not both not-P and not-Q."

[5] By principle 3.1, "If P then Q" entails "Not both P and not-Q." Since Q is ex hypothesi "more general" than P, it would be false to assert "Either P or not-Q" (since P and not-Q can both be false) and this implies that its negation is true.

[6] By principle 3.1, "If P then Q" entails "Either not-P or Q." Since ex hypothesi Q is more general than P, Q can be true while P is false. This means that the claim that "Not both Q and not-P" is false, and its negation is therefore true.

4. If P then Q & Not: If Q then P
   (Not: Not both not-P and Q) and (Either not-P or Q)

If the consequent of the affirmative conditional is not "more general" but equal in extension to the antecedent, then a negative exhaustive disjunction in the second sense follows. In other words, the following consequence holds:[7]

5. If P then Q & If Q then P
   Not: [(Either P or not-Q) & Not: Not both P & not-Q)]

A negative exclusive disjunction in the second sense follows from the same conditional:[8]

6. If P then Q & If Q then P
   Not: [(Not both P & Q) & (Not: Either P or Q)]

Mallawī noted that these six principles (1–6) were original to him, prefacing his discussion of them with the words: "God has inspired me in this poem on a number of points" (*wa-qad fataḥa Allāhu taʿālā fī hādhihi l-manẓūmati bi-masāʾil*) (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fol. 26b).

23.3.3. Case 3

Sanūsī ended his section on the immediate implications of hypotheticals by expounding principles 7.1–7.5 listed in table 23.1. To these, Mallawī added two further principles in the original version of his work. The first of these is

> 7.6. If the negative-universal conditional is true with a universal antecedent, then it is true with a particular antecedent.

In other words, he proposed that the following consequence holds:

Never: If Every A is B then Q ⇒ Never: If Some A is B then Q

Mallawī initially offered the following consideration in support of the principle: The universal antecedent" is "more specific" than the particular antecedent, and if something does not follow from the "more specific," then it does not follow from the "more general." As mentioned already, the basic principle—that what does not follow from the "more specific" does not follow from the "more general"—had been used by Sanūsī to prove the aforementioned principle 1.6.2 stating that a conjunction of antecedents in a negative-universal conditional entails a conjunction of negative-universal conditionals. Mallawī seems to have been the first to have used this principle to defend the novel consequence (7.6). He initially claimed that he had not seen anyone do so, and that it was an "inspiration" (*fatḥ*) from God (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, 33b). Nonetheless, he later crossed out this reference to divine inspiration in his personal manuscript copy and added a lengthy marginal annotation in which he withdrew his claim. As was seen above, Yūsī's student Ibn Yaʿqūb had challenged the principle that what never follows from the "more specific" never follows from the "more general," leading him to modify principle 1.6.2. Mallawī eventually reached a similar conclusion, most probably independently (since if he had read Ibn Yaʿqūb's commentary he would surely have revised the following principle 7.7 discussed below). In his marginal comment, he wrote:

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[7] By principles 3.1 and 3.2, the two initial conditionals entail "Not both P and not-Q" and "Either P or not-Q," and this in turn means that there is a strict disjunction between P and not-Q. A strict disjunction is incompatible with the exhaustive disjunction in the second sense, and therefore the negation of such an exhaustive disjunction is true.

[8] The proof is analogous to that of the preceding principle.

> Note that what I mentioned—that if the negative-universal conditional is true with a universal antecedent, then it is true with a particular antecedent—is something that I took from their earlier making a conjunction in the antecedent of the negative-universal conditional entail a conjunction of negative-universal conditionals. They said: This is because negating the entailment of something by a whole implies negating the entailment of that thing by a part of the whole, for if the part entailed that thing, then the whole containing that part would entail it too. The part is "more specific" than the whole, and the general principle is that what does not follow from the "more specific" does not follow from the "more general." From this, I took the proof thus: This proof, if it were conceded, would open the way to proving that, if negative-universal conditional is true with a universal antecedent, then it is true with a particular antecedent, as we have explained. So this is based on what they have said and holding them to the consequence of their proof. (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fol. 33b)

Mallawī added that he had since come to see (*qad ẓahara lī al-ān*) that the basic principle used to prove 7.6 is misleading. If the claim is that what *never* follows from the "more specific" *sometimes* does not follow from the "more general," then he concedes the claim but this is not sufficient to prove consequences 1.6.2 and 7.6. If the claim is that what *never* follows from the "more specific" *never* follows from the "more general," then the principle is false. "This is a horse" never follows from "This is rational & an animal," but this does not entail that "This is a horse" never follows from either part of the antecedent. It would be false to say, "Never: If this is an animal then it is a horse" since its contradictory is true "Sometimes: If this is an animal then it is a horse." This shows that Sanūsī's principle 1.6.2 is in fact invalid. The case is similar with the proposed principle 7.6. A counterexample given by Mallawī in his marginal remark is the following:

Necessarily not: if every animal is rational then some animal neighs (TRUE)
Necessarily not: if some animal is rational then some animal neighs (FALSE)

Mallawī's second proposed addition is the following principle:

> 7.7. If the affirmative-particular conditional is true with a particular antecedent, then it is true with a universal antecedent.

In other words, the following consequence is held to be valid:

It may be: If Some A is B then Q ⇒ It may be: If Every A is B then Q

Mallawī wrote that he had seen this second principle in the *Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn ʿArafa (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fol. 33b). The proof given in that work is as follows:

It may be: If some A is B then Q	Hypothesis
Always: If every A is B then some A is B	Evident axiom
It may be: If every A is B then Q	Desired consequence

Sanūsī, in his commentary on Ibn ʿArafa's work, stated that this principle was original to Ibn ʿArafa. But he rejected Ibn ʿArafa's proof for it, pointing out that the adduced hypothetical syllogism is in the fourth figure but has a particular-affirmative minor premise and a universal-affirmative major premise. Such a combination is sterile—in the fourth figure, a particular-affirmative minor is only productive with a negative-universal major (Sanūsī, *Sharḥ*, fol. 190a). In response, Mallawī wrote—correctly—that it does not follow from the invalidity of the proof that Ibn ʿArafa's claim is false. He believed that it is possible to give an alternative proof for principle 7.7 and proceeded to supply it. He added that the proof was among "inspirations" given to him by God (*wa-qad fataḥa Allāhu taʿālā fīhi bi-l-dalīli l-mutaqaddim*) (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fol. 33b). Unfortunately, the principle in question is in fact false and the proof that Mallawī provided is unsound. The proof is as follows:

> The consequent is entailed by the antecedent that is a particular proposition, and the particular proposition is entailed by the universal proposition, and so the consequent is entailed by the universal proposition as antecedent, since what is entailed by what is entailed is entailed. (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fols. 33a–33b)

The problem is that the particular proposition is indeed entailed by the universal proposition, and the original consequent is indeed entailed by the particular proposition, but the second entailment is only partial, not universal. Mallawī appealed to the basic principle that entailment is transitive: if proposition Q is entailed by "Some

A is B" and "Some A is B" in turn is entailed by "Every A is B," then Q is entailed by "Every A is B." Mallawī thus in effect used a proof in the first figure of the hypothetical syllogism:

If Every A is B then Some A is B	Evident axiom
If Some A is B then Q	Original proposition
If Every A is B then Q	Desired conclusion

The problem is that the second premise is not quantified universally but particularly—the original conditional is "It may be: If some A is B then Q"—and a first-figure hypothetical syllogism is only valid with a universal major premise.

The falsity of principle 7.7 can in fact be shown by the following counterexample given by Ibn Yaʿqūb in his commentary on Sanūsī's *Mukhtaṣar* (Ibn Yaʿqūb, *Lawāmiʿ*, fol. 65b):

It may be: If some animal is human then some animal is not a human (TRUE)
It may be: If every animal is human then some animal is not a human (FALSE)

Interestingly, when Mallawī in his marginal annotation retracted his proposed consequence (7.6) he made a point that is clearly inconsistent with 7.7. He wrote that one might attempt to prove by modus tollens the principle that what does not follow from the whole does not follow from the part:

If something follows from the part then it follows from the whole
It does not follow from the whole
It does not follow from the part.

He replied by pointing out that this is equivocal: If the meaning is that if something *always* follows from the part then it *always* follows from the whole, then he concedes the premises, but the conclusion would in this case be "It is not the case that it always follows from the part," which is equivalent to the proposition "It may not follow from the part" rather than "It never follows from the part." If, on the other hand, the meaning is that if something *may* follow from the part then it *may* follow from the whole, then he denies the conditional premise. For something may possibly follow from the part and yet not possibly follow from the whole (*li-anna l-juzʿa qad yastalzimu shayʾan istilzāman juzʾiyyan wa-lā yastalzimuhu kulluhu*). Mallawī then gave the following counterexample: "This is a horse" possibly follows from "This is an animal" but does not possibly follow from "This is rational and an animal" (Mallawī, *Lawāzim*, fol. 33b). Though Mallawī's remarks were made in his revised discussion of principle 7.6, they are at once a clear rejection of 7.7 and an incisive diagnosis of what is wrong with the proof Mallawī had initially supplied for it. It seems that Mallawī had second thoughts concerning the first of his proposed additions to Sanūsī's principles (i.e., 7.6) and noted so on the margin of his personal manuscript copy, without noticing that these second thoughts also imply a rejection of the second of his proposed additions (i.e., 7.7).

23.4. Conclusion

The point of the preceding section was not to show that Mallawī was a flawless logician. The last example shows that he wasn't, though it ought to be kept in mind that he wrote his work on the implications of conditionals and disjunctions at the tender age of eighteen. Rather, the point has been to show that the assumption that didactic poems and commentaries are of necessity unoriginal and uncritical is mistaken. The precocious Mallawī was clearly eager—perhaps too eager at times—to establish his credentials as a "verifier" (*muḥaqqiq*) who reflected critically on received views and explored novel issues not treated by his predecessors. The rhetoric of "inspiration" (*fatḥ*) in Mallawī's work is noteworthy (causing him some embarrassment when he later came to recognize that he had made mistakes) but by no means exceptional in seventeenth-century North African scholarly writings. (See, for example, Hashtūkī, *Fatḥ* and Ibn Yaʿqūb, *Mawāhib*.) Mallawī's readiness to modify or dissent from received views was also far from being exceptional. Yūsī, Ibn Yaʿqūb, and indeed Sanūsī himself displayed a similar readiness and, though they wrote commentaries and glosses, were clearly not content with mere explication.

The fact that Mallawī wrote his probing and independent-minded work when he was still a student invites a reconsideration of Rescher's assumption that the teaching of logic in these late centuries was merely a matter of passing on a received set of doctrines with little or no critical reflection. It is of course possible that students were normally expected to address questions and objections circumspectly so as not to appear disrespectful to their teachers. There is also evidence that some teachers were bad-tempered and brooked no questioning, let alone dissent, from their students. Nevertheless, there is no reason to think that this was invariably or even normally the case. A different picture emerges in passages such as the following from Mallawī's work on modal propositions (*muwajjahāt*): At one point, Mallawī presented a counterexample given by Sanūsī to show the invalidity of the contraposition of modal propositions. He then mentioned an objection that Yūsī had raised against Sanūsī's counterexample followed by a reply to Yūsī's objection that he had heard from Yūsī's student ʿAbdullāh al-Kinaksī. He finally added that Kinaksī had told him that Yūsī himself heard this reply and accepted it, "since it was his habit not to be partisan to himself" (*idh kāna min shaʾnihi ʿadamu nuṣrati nafsihi*) (Mallawī, *Muwajjahāt*, fol. 21a).

The writings of Mallawī also serve as a corrective to the thesis, advanced by Peter Gran in *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism* (1979, 2nd ed. 1998), that the study of logic had languished in Egypt before being revived by Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1250/1835) in the early nineteenth century, a revival that Gran saw as a reflection of the state-building efforts of Muḥammad ʿAlī Pāshā (r. 1805–49) (Gran 1998, 145–46). Gran's thesis is alluring: logic only thrived in Egypt once a modernizing and centralizing state started to encourage the "rational-instrumental" sciences to further its own bureaucratic needs. Unfortunately, the thesis is unsustainable and shows the pitfalls of the still-fashionable tendency to subordinate intellectual to social and political history. As noted above, the eighteenth-century scholar Zabīdī accurately observed that logic was studied enthusiastically in Egypt in his day, well before the time of ʿAṭṭār and Muḥammad ʿAlī.

ʿAṭṭār did not introduce the sustained study of logic in Egypt. What he did was to introduce into Egyptian scholarly circles a number of Indo-Islamic works on logic with which he had become acquainted via the Ottoman *Şeyḫülislām* ʿĀrif Ḥikmet (d. 1275/1859), who, in turn, had acquired a number of Indo-Islamic works during his time as Ottoman judge of Medina (ʿAṭṭār *Ḥāshiya*, 436). ʿAṭṭār became a staunch advocate of this tradition. His own major work on logic, a gloss on the commentary of the sixteenth-century Persian–Central Asian scholar ʿUbaydullāh Khabīṣī on Taftāzānī's *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*, is to a large extent a patchwork of quotations from eastern logical works, many of which had been unknown in Egypt prior to his time, by, for example, the Indo-Islamic scholars Mīr Zāhid Haravī (d. 1101/1689), Muḥibb Allāh Bihārī (d. 1119/1707), and Baḥr al-ʿUlūm Lakhnavī (d. 1225/1810).

Even before ʿAṭṭār, there is evidence that the North African tradition of logic was gradually losing its distinctive character. There is evidence for a retrenchment of logical studies in Morocco in the course of the eighteenth century, partly due to the political turmoil and economic decline that followed the death of the powerful Mawlāy Ismāʿīl (r. 1672–1727), and partly due to a deliberate policy of favoring the traditional sciences by Sīdī Muḥammad III (r. 1757–90). (On the latter's hostility to *kalām* and logic, see Harrak 1989, 298ff.) The tradition of commenting upon or glossing the handbooks of Khūnajī and Sanūsī appears to have come to an end by the late eighteenth century, and henceforth Moroccan writings on logic consist of commentaries and glosses on the relatively introductory didactic poems of al-Akhḍarī and Ḥamdūn Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 1232/1817)—handbooks that did not deal with the more intricate aspects of conditional or modal logic.[9]

In the case of Tunis, there is evidence that by the mid-eighteenth-century Khabīṣī's commentary on Taftāzānī's *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* had established itself as a standard handbook, and this work is entirely in the eastern tradition and dealt very cursorily with conditionals and conditional logic (Khabīṣī, *Tadhhīb*, 49–53, 90–92). The Tunisian scholar Ibn Saʿīd al-Ḥajarī (d. 1199/1785), in his gloss on Khabīṣī's commentary, rarely mentioned previous North African logicians and instead advertised his gloss as adjudicating between Dawānī and ʿIṣām al-Dīn Isfarāyinī, both of whom had written incomplete commentaries on Taftāzānī's *Tahdhīb* that stopped well before the formal sections on conversion, contraposition, and syllogism (Ibn Saʿīd, *Ḥāshiya,* 4).

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[9] The last extant Moroccan glosses on Sanūsī's *Mukhtaṣar* that I have managed to find are by ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Fāsī (d. 1188/1773) and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Bannānī (d. 1194/1780) (Khaṭṭāb 1985, 4: nos. 10 and 44). The last commentary on Khūnajī's *Jumal* is the one by Ibn Yaʿqūb al-Wallālī (d. 1128/1716) (Khaṭṭāb 1985, 4: no. 17). My claim is made on the basis of the evidence from C.Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (summarized in Wisnovsky 2004) as well as the catalogs of the major manuscript collections in Morocco: Fāsī 1979–89; Ḥurayshī 1992; Khaṭṭāb 1985; Laḥmar 2009; Manūnī 1985; Tādilī and Murābiṭ 1997–98.

In Egypt, too, it would seem that Mallawī had no real heirs when it came to logic, perhaps in part because "he was better at writing than at lecturing," as noted by Zabīdī (Zabīdī, *Muʿjam*, 1: 42). He had numerous local students, to be sure, but they seem to have been only incidentally concerned with logic. Scholars such as ʿAlī al-ʿAdawī al-Ṣa'īdī (d. 1189/1775) and Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ṣabbān (d. 1206/1792) gained renown in their time, but primarily in other fields: law and rational theology in the former case, grammar and rhetoric in the latter case (Jabartī, *ʿAjāʾib*, 1:414–16; 2:227–33). Their extant works on logic consist of glosses that are either mainly explanatory or cover relatively introductory works. ʿAlī al-Ādawī al-Ṣaʿīdī, in his gloss on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on the *Shamsiyya,* even wrote that the topic of the immediate implications of conditionals and disjunctions is of little importance, and that it had therefore been treated rather briefly in the handbook he was glossing. This is a striking comment for a student of Mallawī's to make, even if he was merely plagiarizing the glosses of the Indo-Islamic scholar Siyālkūtī at this point (ʿAdawī, *Ḥāshiya*, II, 182; compare Siyālkūtī's comments on the same page, lower rubric). Despite ʿAṭṭār's advocacy of the eastern logical tradition, Sanūsī's *Mukhtaṣar* continued to be studied at the Azhar throughout the nineteenth century and was printed in Cairo in 1875 and 1904. The latter edition included the glosses of the rector of the Azhar (*Shaykh al-Azhar*) Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī (d. 1276/1860), but these glosses are pedestrian, living up to the negative stereotypes associated with that literary form. Bājūrī, for example, merely explicated Sanūsī's discussion of the immediate implications of conditionals and disjunctions without mentioning any of the doubts, qualifications, or corrections proposed by Yūsī, Ibn Yaʿqūb, or Mallawī (Bājūrī, *Ḥāshiya*, 159–70).

Mallawī's remarkable work from 1695 on the mutual implications of conditionals and disjunctions—apparently the most detailed treatment of this topic in Arabic since the early fourteenth century—seems therefore not to have inspired further writings in later generations. Instead, it turned out to be one of the last major contributions to the distinctively North African tradition of Arabic logic.[10] In this respect, it is tempting to compare it to a work that was completed fifteen years earlier by another precocious young man: the magnificent *Fantasias* of Henry Purcell (1659–95), which brought to a close the English tradition of consort music for viols that was giving way in Purcell's time to novel musical styles from France and Italy (Taruskin 2009, 196–98).

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[10] Not *the* last. The extensive commentary by the Moroccan scholar Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Hilālī (d. 1175/1761) on a versification of Sanūsī's *Mukhtaṣar* by ʿAbd al-Salām b. al-Ṭayyib al-Qādirī (d. 1110/1698) is an often critical work that devotes considerable attention to the immediate implications of hypotheticals; see Hilālī, *Zawāhir*. Hilālī often cited Yūsī and Ibn Yaʿqūb but seems to have been unaware of Mallawī's work. The slightly later glosses of ʿUmar al-Fāsī and Bannānī on Sanūsī's *Mukhtaṣar* devote very little attention to the immediate implications of hypotheticals.

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CHAPTER 24

FAḌL-I ḤAQQ KHAYRĀBĀDĪ'S (D. 1861), *AL-HADIYYA AL-SAʿĪDIYYA*

ASAD Q. AHMED AND JON MCGINNIS

24.1. What Is the *Hadiyya saʿīdiyya*?

Al-Hadiyya al-saʿīdiyya fī l-ḥikma al-ṭabīʿiyya by the Indian scholar Faḍl-i Ḥaqq b. Faḍl-i Imām Khayrābādī (d. 1861) is perhaps the last independent work written within the Arabic-Islamic tradition of physics (*Ṭabīʿiyyāt*). Its exact date of completion is not known; however, since it is dedicated to Muḥammad Saʿīd ʿAlī Khān, one may confidently state that it was written between 1840 and 1846, which are the dates of his reign as the *nawwāb* of Rampūr (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 7). Some reports that seem to elaborate on the standard and pervasive leitmotif of hurried and careless scholarly composition (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 20) claim that this work is a compilation of lessons the author used to give his son ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq (d. 1898) en route to the British East India Company Residency in Delhi. One such report states that Khayrābādī would write down a daily lesson, which he would impart to his son while they traveled on an elephant. When the section on the heavens was reached, the author's students insisted that the various lessons be collected in the form of a book. The *Gift* (*al-hadiyya*) was a fulfillment of their request (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 12), and, within fifty years of being penned, it was incorporated into some madrasa curricula of South Asia (see the curricular list in Malik, 1977, 540).

It is very likely that the book immediately became a subject of discussion and study among scholars. Before 1877, objections to some arguments (including grammatical usages) had been put forth by Saʿd Allāh b. Niẓām al-Dīn al-Murādābādī (d. 1877) (Ḥasani, *Nuzha*, 7:221–22) and they received responses from Sulṭān Aḥmad b. Allāh Bakhsh (fl. 1922) (Ḥasani, *Nuzha*, 8:175–76), a student of the aforementioned ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Khayrābādī. Already by 1875, ʿAbd Allāh b. Āl Muḥammad al-Bilgrāmī

(d. 1887) (Ḥasanī, *Nuzha*, 8:303) had written a commentary on the *Hadiyya*, entitled *al-Tuḥfa al-ʿaliyya*, which was dedicated to the Nawwāb Muḥammad Kalb ʿAlī Khān of Rampur (d. 1887). In his introduction, the commentator mentions that he was asked to write his commentary when he suggested the printing of the *Hadiyya* to some publishers, so that the book might be made easily available. Here he also notes that the *Hadiyya* includes proofs disregarded by curricular texts, implying its suitability as a replacement of inferior works in the curriculum (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 1–2). As the *Hadiyya* does not cover all the traditional sections on the human soul, it was augmented with five additional parts in a short appendix, entitled *al-Hidāya al-hindiyya ʿalā l-Hadiyya al-saʿīdiyya*, by ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, who completed this task at the behest of Bilgrāmī. In addition to these engagements with the text, we are aware of anonymous margin notes in the very few witnesses preserved in Indian libraries.[1] The quick printing of the *Hadiyya* explains the limited manuscript evidence and also the general dearth of its commentaries and glosses.

As an aside, the introduction of print technology for the production of madrasa texts had the same impact on practically all disciplines of Islamic scholarship. A case in point is the *Sullam al-ʿulūm* of Muḥibb Allāh al-Bihārī, which attracted the attention of almost ninety commentators and glossators in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Once the text began to be disseminated in lithograph, the commentarial engagement with the text (and so also the growth of the tradition it represented) generally disappeared. (On the impact of print technology on the rational sciences [*maʿqūlāt*], see Ahmed, forthcoming-a.) Lithograph and typeset prints of the *Hadiyya* are easily available in Pakistan and India.

The impact of the *Hadiyya* on subsequent Islamic scholarship in South Asia cannot be gauged at this stage of research, since we know precious little about intellectual history for that period and region. Still, one can assess the significance of the text on its own terms based on two factors. The first is that the *Hadiyya* is at the far end of a line of physics textbooks that can be traced back to the *Ishārāt* of Avicenna (980–1037) and the *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* of al-Abharī (1200–1265). Consequently, by comparing the *Hadiyya* with these other texts (as well as the commentaries on them), one can obtain a concrete understanding of the evolution of natural philosophy in postclassical Islamic lands. Indeed the evolution of this textbook tradition was driven by its own internal dialectic. A base textbook became the subject of commentary, and certain topics became focal points for commentary. A subsequent textbook author then distilled out and presented in simplified form the settled responses to those focal issues—should they be reached—or—as was just as often the case—those issues continued to be hotly debated. Additionally, the textbook author supplemented or introduced new material pertinent to a basic understanding of physics as it was understood at his time. Thereafter the process of commentary followed by distillation began again. Some sense of this exchange can be seen by a comparison of the content of these three works presented in the appendix of this chapter. Khayrābādī's *Hadiyya*, then, in a real sense is an attempt to bring to culmination the field of Arabo-Islamic physics. It does so by initially laying out some basic definitions and rules, which are then deployed sequentially for an elaboration of an entire system with astonishing economy of argument. Thus the first part of this chapter presents the essentials of the structure and argument of the *Hadiyya* in an abridged form, so as to give the reader a panoramic view not only of the system of physics, but also an appreciation of the mechanics of the arguments undergirding it. Using this summary, others may hopefully begin fully to assess the *Hadiyya*'s contribution to the field of Arabo-Islamic physics.

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[1] The latest dated manuscript of the *Hadiyya*, found in the Kutubkhāna-yi Qādiriyya, is from 1872 (private correspondence, Mawlānā Khushtar Nūrānī, 7 November 2011). There is also an undated witness in Dār al-ʿulūm Deoband, India; see Ẓafīr al-Din, *Taʿāruf*, 144.

The second factor that one should take into account when assessing the significance of the *Hadiyya* is that unlike other texts in the tradition, which frequently appear insular to a dynamic tradition of internal textual dialectic, the *Hadiyya* is concerned with developments in other fields, and tries to incorporate what is valuable while weeding out what seems questionable. For example, in partial response to post-Copernican developments in astronomy, the *Hadiyya* consciously incorporates a defense of a geocentric planetary model within its primary task of unfolding systematic physics. Also it draws upon *kalām* atomistic insights into the nature of motion and time and then integrates them into a physics that is committed to continua. Moreover, it also argues that the soul, as a unified entity, is responsible for all perceptual and intelligible apprehensions. What one sees in the *Hadiyya* is that while in general for his inspiration Khayrābādī returns to Avicenna's *Shifāʾ*—which the subsequent textbook tradition frequently ignored in favor of Avicenna's smaller encyclopedia, the *Ishārāt*—Khayrābādī often applies Avicenna's argumentation in wholly novel, even anti-Avicennan ways. The second section of this chapter explores certain select instances of such disciplinary apertures and creative developments within the *Hadiyya*.

24.2. THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF A TRADITION: STRUCTURE AND ARGUMENT

As one can see from a quick look at the appendix of this chapter, the structure of the *Hadiyya* is similar to that of the physics sections of Avicenna's *Ishārāt* and al-Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*. In fact one may safely say that it represents the continuity of the *Ishārāt* tradition via the lens of the *Hidāya* and the commentarial tradition of the latter in the work of Qāḍī Mīr al-Maybudī (d. 909/1504) and, to a lesser extent, of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045/1635). In fact, the commentaries of Mullā Ṣadrā and Maybudī were the main interpretive traditions of the *Hidāya* studied in the South Asian curricula, which remains the case even today. Given this intellectual pedigree, most of the positions on various problems of physics are shared by all three works and, to this extent, the *Hadiyya*'s contribution to the discipline is generally limited. Its significance lies chiefly in its systematization of physics by appeal to a small set of principles, definitions, and rules, and its integration into that system of elements from other fields. This section aims to lay bare the system as a proof that unfolds in the course of the book.

Khayrābādī opens the *Hadiyya* with a description of the purview of the discipline of physics; he arrives at his positions by a method of division. His presentation may be summarized as follows.

1. Philosophy is concerned with discovering the states of existents.
2. These existents are either subject to man's power and choice or not.
3. The former are the subject of practical philosophy and the latter the subject of theoretical philosophy.
4. Theoretical philosophy has three types of subjects: existents that require matter in their mental and extramental existence; existents that require matter only in external existence; and existents that do not require matter in either mode of existence.
5. That theoretical knowledge that concerns itself with subjects of the first type is physics [*Hadiyya* [Multan], 22–30].
6. Thus the subject of physics is bodies that require matter in their mental and extramental existence.
7. Bodies are said homonymously, that is, one way insofar as they are extended in three dimensions and another way insofar as they are natural.
8. Bodies insofar as they are extended and measureable are subjects of mathematics (4 above).
9. So physics concerns itself with the natural body, that is, a body insofar as it is subject to movement and rest, or insofar as it is capable of change, or insofar as it has matter, or insofar as it has a nature.

From this point on, the most important arguments and claims of the *Hadiyya* depend on an understanding of the natural body. Once this natural body is conceptually grasped, practically everything else is shown to be a logical unfolding and implication of its definition. Yet from his reading of works in the tradition of the *Posterior Analytics* (*Kitāb al-Burhān*), Khayrābādī is aware that no science demonstrates the definitions of its own subject matter. He also realizes the incomparable significance of defining the natural body for his entire project. Thus he writes:

> The investigation of the essence (*mahiyya*) of the body—whether it is composed of indivisible parts or composed of matter and form, whether it is a simple continuous substance in itself or composed of substance and accident . . . —is not among the problems of physics. It is only among the problems of metaphysics, as we shall mention. . . . It has become customary, however, to mention these problems in the opening parts of physics because most of the problems [of physics] depend on these problems. One cannot come to have certainty about most problems of this discipline properly for as long as one has not investigated the true nature (*ḥaqīqa*) of the natural body. (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 32–33)

Thus, it is this most significant discussion for the field of physics, that is, what a natural body is, that now occupies Khayrābādī for the remainder of his lengthy introduction.

As most of the conclusions argued in the other parts of the book rely directly or indirectly upon the proofs and positions settled in this opening chapter, it is suitable to lay out the material in a summary form.

1. The natural body is a substance.
2. It is possible to posit in this natural body an arbitrary extension (*buʿd*) (which is the length), and then posit another extension that is perpendicular to the first (which is the breadth), and then again a third extension that is perpendicular to the first two (which is the depth).
3. Thus the genus of a body is substance, and being extended in three ways is like the differentia.
4. This extended body is either simple, like an element (earth, water, air, or fire), or a compound of simple bodies, such as flesh, blood, and so on.
5. Compound bodies are constituted either of other bodies that have the same nature, like a clod of dirt, or of bodies of different natures, like an animal.
6. Each part of a compound body is a simple body, which is made of parts that are themselves not bodies, namely, as one will learn, of matter and form.

A brief note about point 3 is warranted here. Khayrābādī, who follows Maybudī very closely throughout the book, picks up a discussion from the latter's commentary on the *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*. Whereas Maybudī was concerned with the subject matter of mathematics, Khayrābādī extends Maybudī's insights to physics. Both thinkers argue the rather interesting point that the supposed extensions of the body are limited to the *tajwīz ʿaqlī*. This latter term refers to the supposition of something with a view to an actual reality (*al-wāqiʿ*) and with reference to the way a thing is in itself (*fī nafs al-amr*). This manner of supposition is contrasted with a *taqdīr ʿaqlī*, that is, one where no consideration of either of these things is taken into account. In other words, whereas a *taqdīr* would allow for false and absurd intensions and suppositions (such as "Zayd-as-donkey"), a *tajwīz* would not. The subject matter of physics, therefore, is bodies insofar as they exist in the actual world and insofar as they are considered in themselves. This means that physics is not concerned with the movement of a theoretical body, even if it is considered in itself, if this body is posited in an imagined, but nonactual, system. In turn, this means that physics is concerned with the essential accidents of bodies in themselves insofar as these accidents are valid with reference to a given system of existence. (See *Hadiyya* [Multan], 33–34 and Maybudi, 6–7; the inspiration for this discussion may ultimately have been drawn directly from *Najāt*, 135).

Khayrābādī now begins his most extended discussion of the book, namely, clarifying the nature of these nonbodily parts that constitute a simple body. That is because how one understands the nature of these parts, in turn, implies the nature of the composite body and the nature of the body, whether simple or compound, in turn, explains the essential accidents of body, such as a body's change or motion, which make up a key element of the subject matter of physics proper.

The first task is to refute the possibility of atomism. Of historical note, this approach is not the first order of business in standard Aristotelian natural philosophy and indeed it does not even typify the approach of Avicenna's *Shifāʾ*, where a refutation of atomism falls under Book III. Instead it represents the approach of Avicenna's *Najāt* and *Ishārāt* and much of the post-*Ishārāt* tradition of physics. What is perhaps most notable about this new approach is its mixture of physics and metaphysics. This mixture of physics and metaphysics represented such a break with the earlier Aristotelian approach to physics, that many subsequent commentators in the post-Avicennan Islamic world, like Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (Avicenna and Ṭūsī, 23–24), felt a need to explain this novel cross-disciplinary presentation. Khayrābādī's observation that an understanding of the essence of the body is a prerequisite for establishing most of the claims of physics is certainly an attempt to explain Avicenna's novel reordering of the material.

Though the discussion about the constitutive parts is a reiteration of material found in earlier works, given its centrality for the unfolding of the larger system, it is perhaps suitable to present its most salient elements. The details will serve as a backdrop for understanding the integrity of the system as a whole. Khayrābādī states that the constitutive parts of a simple body may exist in one of four ways: they may (I) be finite in number and exist in actuality in the body; (II) be finite and exist in potentiality in the body; (III) be infinite and exist in actuality in the body; and (IV) be infinite and exist in potentiality in the body (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 36–37). Khayrābādī identifies the proponents of the four positions as (I) the majority of the *mutakallimūn*, (II) al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), (III) al-Naẓẓām (d. 845) and some ancient Greeks, and (IV) the Peripatetic philosophers, *Ishrāqī*s, and the *muḥaqqiqūn min al-mutakallimīn*.

Khayrābādī argues for position (IV) by showing that the other three positions are philosophically wanting, and indeed all suffer from a similar malady. Before turning to his argument, it should be noted that both positions (I) and (II) require that the basic constitutive parts be finite in number. For both positions entail a limit to the divisibility of these parts. As such those parts are atomic in structure, a fact that both the respective proponents of these positions recognized and Khayrābādī assumes. Khayrābādī presents two additional variations of this proof, but both of them reduce to the fundamentals of the one presented here (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 37ff.).

His argument against atomism thus runs as follows:

1. A composite body consists of parts.
2. The parts either (a) meet or (b) do not meet (*yulāqī*).
3. If (2b), then there is no body, since the parts must meet to constitute a body.
4. If (2a), the parts that meet must either (a) entirely interpenetrate or (b) not.
5. If (4a), they entirely interpenetrate, then all parts have one location (*ḥayyiz*).
6. If all parts have one location, then the body has no size;
7. but what has no size, that is, has no extension, is not a body (defn. of natural body).

8. If (4b), the parts do not entirely interpenetrate, then either (a) they touch to form a body or (b) they partially interpenetrate each other.
9. If (8b), they touch, then a part of one part touches a part of another part, and so the indivisible part would be divisible, a contradiction.
10. If (8b), the parts partially interpenetrate each other, then an indivisible part has a part that interpenetrates and a part that does not, and so again an indivisible part would be divisible, a contradiction.
11. Thus there can be no actual indivisible part of a body, that is, atoms are impossible.

Since this argument has proven the impossibility of an actual indivisible part by means of the impossibility of its conceptualization, Khayrābādī states that the possibility of potential indivisible parts, that is, position (II), is also shown to be false, presumably because whatever is potential can be made actual, in which case the initial argument comes to play.

The argument similarly applies to position (III), namely that the basic constitutive parts of a body are infinite and exist as actual in the body (*Hadiyya*, 37–41). For consider one of the actually infinite parts that purportedly is the most basic constitutive part of the body: Either that part is indivisible, in which case it is an atom and the above argument applies, or it is divisible, in which case it is not one of the most basic actual constitutive parts of the body, but it was assumed it was, a contradiction.

This leaves one with the truth of (IV), namely that the parts of a body are infinitely divisible in potentiality. In other words, the natural body is continuous in itself having no actual parts, and yet is capable of potentially infinite division, even if this division is limited to a body only insofar as it is mentally (and not extramentally) instantiated. Khayrābādī is indeed keenly aware of the significance of this proof. For he writes:

> Being receptive to infinite divisibility is among the accidents of the natural body insofar as it implies the potential to change. The investigation of what occurs to [the body] in this respect is an investigation in the discipline of physics (*baḥth ṭabīʿī*). (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 44)

In other words, as noted above, physics does not consider the natural body except as it is in and of itself (*fī nafs al-amr*); rather, it uncovers the accidents belonging to it with reference to the body's being a potentially divisible entity.

It is on the edifice of this proof about the continuity of the body and on its logical consequences that practically all the remainder of the physics of the *Hadiyya* is constructed. That is because once it becomes clear that the atomism of the *mutakallimūn* must be impossible, the body is shown to be continuous in actuality and potentially divisible ad infinitum. One can show as corollaries that the space in which a natural body exists must be continuous. Thus its motion through that space must be continuous too, as well as the time during which the motion occurs (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 19, "*tadhyīl*").

As noted above, the accident of the body that is the central point of interest is change. So how does an investigation of change develop from this point onward, and how does it relate back to the continuity and potentially infinite divisibility of the body? The remainder of this section highlights some examples.

1. Since the body is continuous, *it must be continuous in itself and the continuity cannot be accidental to it*. This is so because, otherwise, either the body in itself would consist in parts that are free from extension and continuity or it would be composed of atoms. The former possibility entails that a natural body is not a body, since a body was defined as having extension at the outset, and the latter has been shown to be false (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 45).

2. *In itself, the body is composed of two parts or substances.*, One of these parts inheres (ḥāll) in the other and supplies it with its attributes. The other part, namely, prime matter (*hayūlā*), is the substrate in which the other inheres. Prime matter subsists in itself,[2] but it is neither continuous nor discrete, neither one nor many. Any attributes that it has qua natural body are due to that which inheres in prime matter, namely, the corporeal form (*ṣūra jismiyya*). The corporeal form, Khayrābādī tells us, is a substance that subsists in the other part and is in itself a single continuous thing through a single continuity. Based upon his earlier refutation of atomism and the consequent continuity of the body, he claims that the potentiality of divisibility is due to the matter and not the form (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 47ff.).

Once it has been established that a body is continuous and so potentially infinitely divisible and that it is made up of form and prime matter, Khayrābādī is naturally led into a discussion of the relationship between these two constitutive parts. He argues that they are bound to each other, not as inextricably united with respect to their existence—in the sense that parts are united to constitute the whole—but in a relation of the inherence of one in the other. The nature of the inherence, he goes on to argue, is the same for all bodies, including the celestial bodies. At this juncture, then, he is led to adopt a first position that seems to differ from earlier texts, such as the *De Caelo*, in physics: given that all bodies are constituted in exactly the same fashion:

> It is necessary for all bodies—whether it is possible for them to be divisible extramentally or not (such as the celestial bodies are for them [that is, the philosophers])—to be composed of matter and bodily form. [This is so] because the bodily form is a specific nature (*ṭabīʿa nawʿiyya*) and, if a specific nature inheres in a substrate (*maḥall*), it does so due to its essential need for a substrate. (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 52–53)

In other words, Khayrābādī sees no reason to differentiate between elemental and celestial bodies, since all bodies are constituted in the same fashion. In principle, therefore, the heavens are corruptible insofar as they are bodies, though they are incorruptible extramentally, since they have no natural contrary.

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[2] In other words, prime matter is something other than the form, and so really is something, and yet it is not some determinate reality.

That bodies are all constituted in the same manner leads to the problem of their differentiation that is observed in the extramental world. In Khayrābādī's words, "It has been established for them that the corporeal form is one species essence (*māhiyya nawʿiyya*) that is shared by all the elemental and celestial bodies" (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 67–68). The difference among bodies must, therefore, depend on something other than the nature of the body qua body. Khayrābādī writes:

> We only said that the corporeal form is a species nature, because if [one instance of] being corporeal (*jismiyya*) is different from another, it is so because this one is hot and that one cold or this one has a celestial nature and that one has an elemental nature and other things that are associated with being corporeal while being extraneous to it. So the corporeal is one extramental existent and the celestial nature is another that is added extramentally to the extramentally existent corporeal by means of some other existent (*bi-wujūd ghayr wujūdihi*). (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 53–54)

Thus we see that the corporeal nature that is shared by all bodies is one and the same, and so, with respect to the consideration only of the corporeal nature, all types of bodies are identical in all their essential features. The differentiation is due to specific natures that attach to bodies, not due to their corporeality, much as coldness and dryness attach to an elemental and simple body, such as earth.

According to the tradition of physics in which Khayrābādī is operating, species natures also are responsible for a body's natural movement, place of rest, and so on. So Khayrābādī's explanation, which is ultimately in keeping with the tradition, is to posit the corporeal form as a specific shared nature, but one that is a divested reality and so cannot be specified extramentally unless it is invested with differentia. He writes:

> For the corporeal essence is an ambiguous nature (*ṭabīʿa mubhama*) that becomes a positive reality by and constituted through (*tataḥaṣṣalu wa-tataqawwamu*) differentia and is one with them existentially. It has no existence other than the existence [with] a difference and species. (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 54)

In other words, the specific shared nature of a body is ontologically real, but has no existential reality, unless it occurs as a differentiated species.

Additionally, as is well known from the physics tradition, the fact that one shared undifferentiated corporeal form exists differently from another itself requires explanation. For surely, it cannot be the shared form that causes some bodies to be of one species and others to be of another—this would be to give preference to one thing over another without cause and would violate a central principle of Arabo-Islamic philosophy. Additionally, the cause cannot be the prime matter itself, since the prime matter is only a receptive cause and, as such, cannot be the efficient cause that generates the form. Moreover, the corporeal form cannot be the cause of the specifically differentiated body, since it requires prime matter, which is itself required for the definite shape (*shakl*) in which the bodily form exists. The solution to the problem, therefore, lies in the appeal to the idea that a noncorporeal cause emanates existence, so as to cause the matter to subsist through the species form it bestows. While Khayrābādī does not identify this third cause, he clearly has in mind one of the separate causes or Intellects, such as Avicenna's famous Giver of Forms (*Hadiyya* [Multan], 66ff.).

Again, these introductory investigations constitute the premises and definitions for much of what is established in the remainder of the book. Indeed, in the vast number of cases, the proofs for subsequent positions depend upon the body's being extended in length, breadth, and depth, the refutation of atomism, and the consequent continuity of the body, the finitude of the body, and the mutual concomitance of form and body.

As for the "essential accidents of the body insofar as it [has] the aforementioned modalities (*ḥaythiyyāt*)," this topic constitutes the first book of the *Hadiyya* following the introduction, and most of what he argues is rather close to the established tradition, especially as presented by Abharī via Maybudī. It is hence not necessary to highlight the material here in any detail but just to give a quick taste of its content. For example, (1) place (*makān*) is a real thing (*amr wāqiʿī*) and not a mere supposition, and it is the interior surface of a containing body that touches the external surface of the contained body; (2) the natural space (*ḥayyiz*) of the body, that is, the location toward which the body naturally tends and at which it rests, is determined by its specific form; (3) motion occurs in the categories of place, position, quantity, and quality; (4) motion is either essential/natural or accidental/forced, and so on. The second chapter, on celestial bodies, also rehearses positions and arguments from the earlier tradition, such as the spherical shape of the orbs and their circular motion, the eternity of the heavens, the movement of the heavens due to volition, and their incorruptibility. Finally, the third chapter similarly summarizes the positions and arguments found in earlier works regarding the number of the external and internal senses, the noncorporeal nature of the rational soul and the question of its eternity. Since Khayrābādī was executed before completing the *Hadiyya*, his son, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, completed the last five chapters of the last book. Some of their contributions will be assessed in the following section.

24.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE *HADIYYA*

Despite the *Hadiyya*'s reliance on the earlier textbook tradition in physics, there are some interesting points of difference as well as emphasis or re-emphasis that may get lost in the details and technically formidable proofs. As we have seen in recent scholarship, it is such moments of departure—even when they are not salient and especially when they are forced by the system—that contributed to the diachronic growth of the philosophical tradition in postclassical Islam (see, for example, Ahmed 2013). Since the *Hadiyya* represents the last major text in traditional physics and had practically no commentaries, it is difficult to surmise whether such departures would have had any transformative effect. Still, let us take up three interesting examples where the *Hadiyya*'s creativity is manifest.

24.3.1. The Nature of Motion

Again, the proper subject of physics is the natural body inasmuch as it is subject to change and motion. Consequently, how one understands both natural body and motion greatly affects one's conception of the science of physics. Khayrābādī's understanding of natural body has already been discussed. As for his definition of motion (*ḥaraka*), this issue has a long history. Aristotle in his own *Physics* (3.2, 201a27–29), defined motion as the actuality (Gr. *entelekheia*; Ar. *fiʿl wa-kamāl*) of potential as potential. How to understand Aristotle's definition itself became something of an issue among later natural philosophers. Certainly, an easy way to think of motion is to view it as the *gradual* emergence from potentiality to actuality. Avicenna rejected this conception on the grounds that it seemingly involves an explanatory circle; for "gradual" implicitly makes a reference to time, and time is subsequently defined in terms of motion (*Physics*, II.1 (2–3)]. (Time, according to Avicenna, who is himself following Aristotle, is the magnitude of [circular] *motion* with respect to before and after.) Consequently, Avicenna offers up what can only be called a hesitant and even at times opaque analysis of motion that allows him to claim that motion refers to a natural body's being at a point for only an instant, and yet do so in a way that eliminates such blatantly temporal notions as "instant" or "gradual" (see Hasnawi 2011; McGinnis 2006; Ahmad forthcoming-b).

Post-Avicennan thinkers, however, did not all share Avicenna's qualms about defining motion in terms of a gradual emergence from potentiality to actuality. Thus Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 1165) argued that the purported explanatory circle was more apparent than real (*al-Muʿtabar*, 1:28–29). More generally, Suhrawardī (d. 1191) began questioning the very possibility of giving essential or "true scientific" definitions (*The Philosophy of Illumination*, I.1, rule 7). Finally, both of these traditions came together in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) in his earlier "philosophical" work, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, who seemingly in agreement, reports the position of some of the eminent scholars (*baḍ al-fuḍalāʾ*) on the problematic account of motion:

> Conceptualizing the true nature of "all-at-once," "not-all-at-once," and "gradual"—are all primitive conceptualizations owing to the aid of sensation. Certainly, we understand that these things are known only by reason of the now and time, but that requires a demonstration. It is possible that the true nature of motion is known by these things, and thereafter motion fixes a knowledge of time and the now/instant (*al-āna*), which are reasons for those first things' being conceptualized, but in that case no circle is entailed. This is a fine answer. (*al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, 1, 670)

In other words, appealing to a gradual emergence allows one to define or at least understand what motion is in a cognitively primitive way, that is, by appealing to things better known to us. Thereafter we apply what is better known to us to get at a technical understanding, that is, something now better known by nature. No circle is entailed because there are two distinct conceptions of motion at stake: motion qua better known to us and motion qua better known by nature. Motion simply is not being understood in the same way in the two cases, and consequently, Avicenna's purported explanatory circle rests on an equivocation. Whether al-Rāzī in the end actually endorses defining motion in terms of gradual emergence or merely thinks that Avicenna's objection to doing so is not decisive is not entirely clear.[3]

Whatever the case, al-Abharī in his highly influential *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* does define motion as "the gradual emergence of potentiality into actuality (*khurūj min al-quwwa ilā l-fiʿl ʿalā sabīl al-tadrīj*)" (*Hidāya*, 1.9, 29). By the time of Khayrābādī, however, the *Hidāya* had become a battleground over the adequacy of al-Abharī's definition. Thus, for example, some thinkers, like Mullā Ṣadrā in his commentary, reject the attempt to exculpate the purported circular account of defining motion in terms of gradual, and instead he returns to Avicenna's technical definition from the *Shifāʾ* (Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ al-Hidāya al-athīriyya*, II, "*faṣl fī l-ḥaraka wa-l-sukūn*," esp. 104).

Khayrābādī is clearly aware of this debate. While he apparently accepts the position that motion can be defined adequately in terms of a gradual emergence, he also wants to incorporate the advancements of the post-Avicennan tradition. So, for example, after presenting the Aristotelian definition of motion, he writes:

> The truth is that the conceptualization of motion is not something that needs this definition [of Aristotle's]. It is enough to say that it is the emergence from potentiality into actuality gradually, where the meanings of "gradual," "little by little," and "not all at once" are primitive conceptual notions (*al-maʿānī al-awwaliyya*), which is owing to the aid of sensation. Their conceptualization does not depend upon conceptualizing the true nature of time and the now/instant (*al-āna*), even if the now and time are causes for them in existence. As for the description that they mentioned, even if it is less known than the conceptualization of motion in the clear, well-known way, they still define it [i.e., motion] only by means of it [i.e., this description] for a basic understanding and propaedeutics for the positions they confirm about motion. (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 42)

Al-Khayrābādī's point is that the idea of gradual and the like are primitive notions or brute facts, just as potentiality and actuality are primitive notions in Aristotelian natural philosophy. As such, no proof that they exist is necessary. Consequently, since they are primitive notions, they can be introduced into the definition of motion without fear of circularity.

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[3] For al-Rāzī, as for Aristotle and Avicenna, the issue of motion's nature is closely linked with the issue of whether magnitudes are (potentially) infinitely divisible or atomic. Throughout his career, al-Rāzī's attitude toward atomism changed. Thus in works such *as al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* and his commentary on Avicenna's *Ishārāt* he is disinclined toward atomism, whereas in later works such the *Maṭālib al-ʿāliyya* and *al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* he takes a decidedly pro-attitude toward atomism (see Dhanani 2015 and Ahmed forthcoming-b). The texts that appear most important for the subsequent tradition, which we are exploring concerning whether motion can be adequately understood in term of a gradual motion, are *al-Mabāḥith* and *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, although even in these works there is some question as to what al-Rāzī exact position concerning the nature of motion is.

Indeed, in his discussion of time (*zamān*) (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 59ff.), he begins by boldly asserting that there is no doubt that within the soul one thing occurs after another; that notions like change, coming to be, motion, priority, posteriority, and simultaneity are all designated by time; that even an imbecile or child has a knowledge of this; and that everybody knows what age, year, month, day, hour, and the like are. Consequently, there is no reason to prove the existence of time. As for the philosophers' proof for the existence of time, Khayrābādī in effect claims that it explains what external causes bring about these temporal increments. For the philosophers show that a certain continuous quantity or magnitude follows upon motion, which is susceptible to being divided into parts (*ajzāʾ*), which presumably we are to identify with the previously mentioned temporal increments, although Khayrābādī does not explicitly make this final point.

What is of note is that Khayrābādī never gives his own definition of time, but instead discusses approvingly what both *mutakallimūn* and Peripatetics said about time. So, for example, he completely omits the philosophers' definition of time as the measure of motion with respect to before and after, while taking over their arguments concerning the continuity of time. The closest he comes to offering a definition of time is when he notes that some identify time with the collection of temporal increments (*awqāt*), like years, days, or other events, which everyone recognizes. This definition is in fact that of earlier *mutakallimūn*, who were working within a framework of atomistic or discrete magnitudes. Avicenna himself mentions this definition (*Physics*, II.10 (1)), and Khayrābādī repeats Avicenna's account almost verbatim; however, unlike Avicenna Khayrābādī never refutes this account of time but instead seemingly clarifies it using Avicenna's own purported argument for the existence of the time but again now employing that argument to show that the increments must be continuous and so potentially divisible. Khayrābādī, thus, is clear that these increments or parts of time are not temporal atoms but can be always be divided. Thus he goes to great lengths to emphasize the divisibility of temporal parts when discussing the now or instant (*al-āna*), which stands to time as a point stands to a line. In fact, he insists, following Avicenna, that the now is a limiting point (*ḥadd*) posited though an act of the estimative faculty. By mentioning the *kalām* account of time (admittedly neither committing himself to it nor critiquing it) and the Avicennan analysis of the now/instant, Khayrābādī has arguably embedded elements of *kalām* physics within a natural philosophy of the continuous.

Moreover, it is this conception of time and of the now, and the notions of gradual and all-at-once that underlie them, that Khayrābādī presupposes when clarifying what it means to say that motion is the gradual emergence from potency to act. Again Khayrābādī draws upon an idea from Avicenna, which Mullā Ṣadrā had picked up on and, ironically, used to argue *against* defining motion in terms of gradual emergence. Avicenna's insight is that motion is applied in two senses: medial motion (*ḥaraka tawassuṭiyya*) and traverse motion (*ḥaraka qaṭʿiyya*). Traverse motion occurs when one observes an object in two different, opposing states, for example, being *here* and then being *there*. Now in the world, a moving object is not partially *here* and simultaneously partially *there* during its motion. Consequently, in the world, motion is not some continuous thing that at any moment actually extends between *here* and *there* in the way that the distance continuously extends between two points; rather, the relation between these two states is impressed upon the mind, and it is this mental impression that gives rise to traverse motion, that is, the idea of motion as a continuous extended magnitude.

According to Khayrābādī the more important sense of motion is medial motion, though he also accepts the reality of traverse motion. It is medial motion that properly explains "gradual emergence" and why notions like time and the now must be primitive. He explains it thus:

> [Medial-motion] is the body's being between the starting point and ending point such that at every now/instant (*ān*) that is posited during the time of the motion, it is at some limiting point (*ḥadd*) of that with respect to which there is motion [namely, either with respect to quantity, quality, place, or position] at which it was not there before [that instant], nor will it be there after it. Undoubtedly, then, when the body moves and departs from the starting point but has not reached the ending point, it comes to have some simple state, which is its being between the starting and ending points inasmuch as at any instant from when it leaves the starting point until it reaches the ending point it is at some limiting point along the distance at which it was not there before that instant. That is because if it were there before that, it would have been at rest there, and so not undergoing motion, but we had posited it as undergoing motion, which is a contradiction. Likewise, it will not be there after that instant, since if it were there afterward, it would be at rest at that limiting point, and so not undergoing motion, but we posited it as undergoing motion, which is a contradiction. This sense [of motion, namely, medial motion] is what decidedly exists during the emergence. (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 43)

In language that parallels al-Baghdādī and al-Rāzī's response to Avicenna's objection against defining motion in terms of gradual emergence, Khayrābādī continues that this is all known necessarily though the aid of the sensation. Avicenna had somewhat hesitantly suggested this very understanding of motion, realizing that he was radically departing from the earlier Aristotelian tradition. Yet issues of consistency may also have motivated Avicenna's hesitancy. That is because in effect he is defining motion in terms of being at some point for only *an instant*, and yet he had rejected defining motion in terms of a gradual emergence precisely because it employed temporal terms, and so harbored a circular explanation. Khayrābādī has no such qualms, for again he takes the notion of "gradual" and "all-at-once" and so respectively occurring over time or at an instant, as properly basic. As with his discussion of time, Khayrābādī has taken non-Avicennan elements, namely, motion as a gradual emergence, and embedded them into his own physics using Avicennan tools.

24.3.2. A Refutation of the Movement of the Earth

As noted above, the tradition of the physics of the *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* of Abharī inspired interest in the subcontinent mainly for its introduction and the first and (sometimes) second books. The third book, on the elements, is rather sparse in its treatment of the various sections, and neither Maybudī nor Mullā Ṣadrā expands this book considerably in their commentaries. On the other hand, Khayrābādī devotes almost two-thirds of his *Hadiyya* to the topics of this book. It is also this book that was completed by his son ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq at the request of Bilgrāmī.

One of the most interesting and original contributions of Khayrābādī in the third book is his seamless integration of a refutation of the movement of the Earth in the first section of the book, on the simple elements. This may be the first (and perhaps only) deliberate engagement with some elements of the Copernican theory and of its auxiliary arguments in the history of traditional *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, even if Khayrābādī's arguments rely heavily on earlier arguments. The arguments presented by Khayrābādī make it rather clear in what fashion the system of natural philosophy developed by him and the tradition he represented made it impossible to posit the movement of the Earth. (Before proceeding, it should be noted that the Arabic *al-arḍ* can refer either to our planet, Earth, or to the simple dry-cold element, earth. For clarity, we hereafter use the convention of indicating the planet with a capital *E* and the element with a lowercase *e*.)

There are three principles that are developed in the earlier parts of the *Hadiyya* that contribute to the systematic refutation of the movement of the Earth. In the order of their appearance in the book, these are (1) that distance and extension are finite; (2) that directionality is delimited; and (3) that earth has a rectilinear motive force (*al-mayl al-mustaqīm*) toward the lowest point that is natural to its species form, namely, what was traditionally identified with the center of the cosmos. On the basis of these three principles, the following types of arguments are offered after the elemental nature of the Earth is discussed.

1. If earth has rectilinear motion, as was established in the earlier parts of the book, then the Earth, which is primarily composed of earth, is stationary. Otherwise, it would either move upward or downward perpetually, since if it were to reach its natural place, it would come to be at rest; however, he had argued earlier (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 24ff.) that the cosmos is finite in expanse. Consequently, the perpetual motion, that is, infinite motion either upward or downward, is impossible.

2. Another argument is that, if the Earth were moving upward, then anything that was also earth, say, a clump, would also move in the same direction. Since a larger clump of earth has greater motive force than a smaller clump, the larger clump would move upward faster than the smaller clump. However, one observes the opposite of this in reality, namely, the larger clump moves downward toward the Earth faster than a smaller clump. Similarly, if the Earth were moving downward, no clump smaller than it would

ever reach it, when thrown upward, since the motive force of the Earth would be greater than it, causing the Earth to move faster (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 83).

The other possibility is that the Earth does not have rectilinear motion but circular motion. Khayrābādī states that this is the doctrine of some ancient Greeks and of the foreigners of his own times. The latter hold that the Earth moves around a center from the west to the east. The observed movement of the celestial bodies appears as it does because the perspective of a person on the Earth is akin to that of a person sitting in a ship. Such a person would imagine the shore to be moving in the opposite direction relative to the movement of his ship. Refutations of this theory are of the following type.

3. The nature of earth has already been discussed and it has been demonstrated that this nature requires rectilinear motion and a specific motive force. It has also been shown that every body must have a motive force and that no body can have both rectilinear and circular motion and motive force.

If one were to disregard the proof of the rectilinear motion and motive force of earth and were to adopt instead, by way of concession and for the sake of argument, that the Earth does have a circular motion, then the following problems would arise.

4. A stone thrown at a perpendicular angle to the surface of the Earth often returns to the same point on the Earth. This would not be possible if the Earth were moving.
5. A clump of earth thrown westward would appear faster than a clump thrown eastward, because in the former case the Earth would be moving in a direction opposite that of the projectile.

Khayrābādī next considers the explanation, offered by the proponents of the circular motion of the Earth, that the reason the aforementioned anomalies are not observed is that certain forces, such as the air and water, which move with the motion of the Earth, balance them out.[4] Thus one only observes the movement of the object that is essential to it, not the external forced motions. Khayrābādī responds with additional thought experiments in the following fashion.

6. Assume two ships with the same motive force, one traveling eastward and one westward. According to the argument of the proponents of the circular motion of the Earth, the reason the aforementioned anomalies are not observed is that they are balanced out due to the accidental motion of elements connected with the Earth, such as air and water. Thus, in addition to their own motive force, these two ships will also be affected by the accidental and forced motion of the water, which is moved accidentally by the

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[4] Khayrābādī's objection to his adversaries' response to these anomalies suggests that either he was not fully engaging with the Newtonian tradition of astronomy or he did not fully understand (or perhaps simply did not accept) the notion of inertia.

motion of the Earth. In addition, the air above the water would also move as an accident of the motion of the water. As a result, the motion of the ship moving westward would be considerably faster and that of the ship moving westward would be very much slower or nonexistent; however, this is not what is observed in reality (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 83ff.).

Khayrābādī offers a number of similar arguments in the pages that follow and ends the discussion with the statement:

> The truth is that the doctrine of circular motion of the Earth is idle talk and includes horrendous things and prattle. We only expanded on [the task of] refuting it and gave details because the contemporary philosophasters mislead people and the weak of mind rely on their foolishness. The latter did not find any demonstration against them and found no way to refute them. (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 91)

Recent scholarship (see, for instance, Dallal 2010) has shown how Aristotelian cosmology had come to stand in a state of increasing tension with the requirements and project of astronomy and how, in the balance of such tensions, new models were produced in the premodern Islamic astronomical tradition. In the case under study, it appears that it is less the cosmological and more the kinematic and dynamic principles that led Khayrābādī to argue that the Earth is stationary.

24.3.3. *The Unity of the Soul: Apprehension and Perception*

Khayrābādī's *Hadiyya* ends rather abruptly with a section on the unity and differences of souls with respect to their essences. In the Lahore lithograph, Bilgrāmī notes that the text would really and properly end with another five investigations on the soul that had been mentioned by Khayrābādī himself in his enumeration of the various doctrines concerning the soul. Since the work was not completed due to the dictates of fortune (*li-sūʾ al-ittifāq*), his son ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Khayrābādī completed the remaining parts at Bilgrāmī's behest some ten-odd years after the author's death (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 244).

Assuming that ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq faithfully presented the system Khayrābādī himself would have elaborated, we may consider his appendix to be a continuation of the *Hadiyya*. All five sections discuss various questions regarding the soul, particularly its relation to the body, its temporal generation and preservation after separation from the body, and the nature of its apprehension (*idrāk*). It is in this last subject, again in the interest of systematically defending and demonstrating certain other doctrines, that the text makes some interesting and new contributions.

The argument effectively has its origins in the vexed question of the relation of the soul to the body, and this relation is itself predicated upon conclusions reached in the course of the proof of the temporal generation and postbody persistence of the soul. In the second investigation (seventh in the series started by the *Hadiyya* proper), ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq advances the well-known argument that, though the rational soul is abstracted from the body in itself, it comes to be temporally generated insofar as there exists the suitable preparation in the body (due to the proper mixtures) for establishing an association (*taʿalluq*) with the body. In other words, the soul cannot be associated with just any body, such as with a rock or silicon, but only with a body that has been suitably prepared such that the body serves as the substrate (*maḥall*) for such preparedness and ultimately for the soul. When the body loses its proper mixture or suitable preparedness, it is divested of its association with the soul, and so is corrupted. In other words, it is no longer the same kind of body that it was before, namely, it is no longer a living body. In short, it is the body that is subject to privation and corruption.

This does not mean that the soul in itself serves as a substrate that is receptive of nonexistence and corruption. In fact, the majority of the *Faṣl* "On Humans," which is from the final section of the psychology that Khayrābādī himself had completed, is a sustained effort to show that the rational soul of humans is not associated with matter. Thus, after arguing that the rational soul is unique to humans among animals, he dedicates an investigation to showing that the human soul cannot be a humoral temperament (*Faṣl* VII.1) and another one to showing that neither can it be a bodily organ (*Faṣl* VII.2). Khayrābādī then provides no less than five indications (*dalīl*) that the rational soul of humans in general must be free from matter (*Faṣl* VII.3). Consequently, the soul does not pass away with the passing of the body. The problems with these arguments notwithstanding (some of which ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq outlines), the central point is that the soul does have some kind of existence in itself (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 7ff. [appendix]).

If one now turns to the fourth discussion in the appendix, where the topic is the nature of the relation of the soul to the body, the starting assumption, as demonstrated above, is that the soul is abstracted in itself and that it does not exist in any substrate (*mujarrada fī dhātihā ghayr ḥālla fī shayʾ*); rather, its relation to the body is like the relation of an artisan to his tools or that of a lover deeply attached to his beloved. In both cases, the former can subsist without the latter. It is at the end of this discussion that ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq engages in a conversation with some philosophers who claim that there are several different souls that employ the different parts of the body as their tools and that the conglomeration (*majmūʿ*) of these souls is called man. The proof of this, they claim, is, one, that one sees that plants only have a vegetative soul, but not the animal or rational souls, and, two, that animals have the vegetative and animal souls, but not the rational soul. This demonstrates that each of these souls (and the many others, such as the cogitative, sensitive, etc.) must be distinct from each other.

Given that the soul previously was shown to have an existence in itself and that the preparedness for its temporal generation was attributed to the association that it has with a body with a suitable mixture, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq finds the aforementioned argument for the multiplicity of souls to be untenable. He states,

> The appetitive faculty (*quwwa* = *nafs*) existent in a plant, for example, is not the appetitive faculty existent in an animal, with respect to species. Similarly, the sensitive [faculty] existent in a nonrational animal is not one with the sensitive [faculty] existent in man with respect to the reality of the species. Rather, these two are one when

> taken in the sense of genus, that is, if their two senses are taken absolutely, without the condition of being mixed [with the body] or being abstracted from something that is other than it. For example, sensible is a single sense as a genus, even though it is a specific difference [constituting] animal [insofar as animal] is taken as a genus. So if this sense, that is, sensible, is taken insofar as it is fully invested (*al-taḥaṣṣul*) [with specificity], then it is something whose existence is complete, without there being any need for some other completion for it. This is how it is with respect to all animals. And if [sensible] is taken such that it is not independent with respect to its existence and that its existence and true nature are not yet [specifically] invested and its existence is not perfected, then this sense [of sensible] is different from the first sense, with respect to species, though it is one with it with respect to genus. The judgment that the sensible is different from the rational is only true with respect to the first type [i.e., the genus] and not the second type. So the sensible soul is different from the cogitative soul, but they are one with respect to man. And this is the doctrine about the appetitive soul in plants and in animals and in humans in relation to the sensible soul and the rational soul. (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 18f. [appendix])

ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq is pointing out that the appetitive soul, for example, is something unified insofar as it is a genus and divested of any particularity. As such, it may be taken to be a distinct soul. However, as positive realities (associated with a suitable bodily mixture), the appetitive souls in plants, animals, and humans are distinct and are constitutive of three different species, with each of which the appetitive souls form a unified and distinct existence. Thus, as positive and invested realities, the appetitive souls constitute distinct wholes with plants, animals, and humans. With this argument, then, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq intends to falsify the claim that a conglomeration of souls constitute each species. He then goes on to state that the various souls must be joined by something within a single species, much as the common sense (*ḥiss mushtarak*) joins the various senses. He writes, "This common thing in which these faculties are joined is something that each one of us feels (*yarāhu*) is his self (*dhātuhu*). . . . This thing is the first thing that joins [the faculties] and is the perfection of the body . . . and is the self (*dhāt*)" (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 19 [appendix]).

With this doctrine of the unity of the various faculties firmly established, the arguments of the third section (eighth in Khayrābādī's series) make perfect sense. Here the main issue of discussion is whether the sensible faculties apprehend particulars or whether the soul does so. Given that ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq is a proponent of the specific unity of all the faculties under one soul, his argument and ultimate position on this question should be predictable. He writes:

> There is nobody who doubts that he is one and that it is he who hears sounds and sees colors. . . . So if each of the sensibilia had one thing that apprehended it and [if] there were another thing that apprehended the intelligibles, [the person] would not have a self (*dhāt*) to which he could point [and say that] "I apprehend all of these." But this is the opposite of what everyone finds to be [true] for himself. (*Hadiyya* [Lahore], 13 [appendix]; also cf. *Najāt*, 200 ff.)

With this and similar arguments, many of which are predicated on the systematic unfolding of the arguments above, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq seems to collapse the long-standing distinction between the rational soul, which apprehends intelligibles, and other faculties. To be sure, he is not claiming that the rational faculty is not distinct from other faculties insofar as they are genera. Rather, as noted above, the investment of the rational soul in a specific mode of existence as man, associated with a suitable bodily mixture, results in an entity whose parts are unified and nondistinct within a given self and species. The tensions and reverberations in the system of *Ṭabīʿiyyāt* and *Ilāhiyyāt* that may have resulted from this doctrine—especially in the area of eschatology and prophetology—of course never materialized.

24.4. Conclusions

The *Hadiyya* of Khayrābādī was intended as a textbook on natural philosophy. As such its main function was to present the system of physics current in the Islamic world at that time for a student audience, and so it is not a work of innovations or daring new arguments. Despite the overall conservative nature of the *Hadiyya*, it nonetheless is of considerable historical importance. First, it represents the far end of a tradition that begins with Aristotle, undergoes radical reinterpretation at the hands of Avicenna, and is subsequently submitted to intense criticism by such notable figures as Abū l-Barakāt, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Razī, Qāḍī Mīr al-Maybudī, and Mullā Ṣadrā. Consequently, it provides a terminus, if not road map, for those interested in the history of what might be called "Islamic natural philosophy." Second, inasmuch as the *Hadiyya* is one of the latest Arabic textbooks on natural philosophy, if not the last, Khayrābādī has the benefit of hindsight and so can present Islamic natural philosophy in a much more systematic, elegant, and economical way than his predecessors. Indeed Khayrābādī is able to avoid many of the pitfalls and cul-de-sacs of those who went before him, as well as draw upon and even respond to multiple traditions. Third, and finally, even if frequently the *Hadiyya* repeats what came before it, there are still novel insights and creative twists, which make the work of inherent interest to historians of philosophy and science alike.

Appendix

While table 24.1 is not a fully detailed table of contents of the *Hadiyya* (and even less so for the *Ishārāt* and *Hidāyat*), it does provide basic information for making comparisons among the three works, so as better to assess what is novel in Khayrābādī's physical system.

Table 24.1 A comparison of Avicenna's *Ishārāt*, al-Abharī's *Hidāya* and Khayrābādī's *Hadiyya*

Subject content	*Ishārāt*	*Hidāya*	*Hadiyya*
On the nature and definition of the natural body	Cf. Ṭūsī's intro. to the physics of *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*	Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā's intro. to *qism* II of *Sharḥ al-Hidāya*	*Muqaddima*, 1
Refutation of atomism	*Namaṭ* 1.1–4	*Fann* 1.1	——, 2
Establishing matter	——, 1.5–6	——, 1.2	——, 3
Form of corporeality cannot be stripped from matter	——, 1.7–10	——, 1.3	——, 4
The finitude of spatial magnitudes	——, 1.11	——, 1.3	——,
Matter cannot be stripped from form	——, 1.12–16	——, 1.4	——, 5
On the species form	——, 1.17–20	——, 1.5	——, 6
On the manner of entailment between species form and matter	——, 1.21–27	——, 1.5	——, 7
On simples, e.g., plane, line, point (a prelude to place)	——, 1.28	Cf. *Fann* I.4	*Fann* 1.1.1
On void	——, 1.29–31	——, 1.6	——, 1.1.2
On space (with discussion of directions & natural place)	——, 1.32–35; *namaṭ* 2.1–4	——, 1.7	——, 1.2
On nature and the types of motion	Cf. Ṭūsī's *Sharḥ*, *namaṭ* 2.5	Cf. *Fann* 1.9	Cf. *Fann* 2.2
On shape (with discussion of position)	——, 2.6	——, 1.8	——, 1.3
On motion (with discussion of rest & inclination)	*Namaṭ* 2.7–11	——, 1.9	——, 1.4
Defining motion and rest		Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ*, 1.9	——, 1.4.1
Explaining medial and traverse motion		Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ*, 1.9	——, 1.4.2
Six factors associated with motion		Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ*, 1.9	——, 1.4.3
The categories in which motion occurs		Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ*, 1.9	——, 1.4.4
Essential and accidental motion			——, 1.4.5
On inclination/motive force			——, 1.4.6

(*continued*)

Table 24.1 (Continued)

Subject content	*Ishārāt*	*Hidāya*	*Hadiyya*
Inclination and forced motion			——, 1.4.7
Rectilinear and circular motion			——, 1.4.8
Body have only a single inclination			——, 1.4.9
Medial rest			——, 1.4.10
Velocity			——, 1.4.11
Discussion of time	Treated in metaphysics	——, 1.10	——, 1.5
The essence of time			——, 1.5.1
On the now/instant			——, 1.5.2
Establishing the principle delimiting direction	——, 2.12–14	*Fann* 2.1	*Fann* 2.1
Simplicity of the celestial spheres	——, 2.12–14	——, 2.2	——, 2.2
Celestial spheres have circular inclination	——, 2.15–17	——, 2.3	——, 2.3
Celestial spheres are not subject to generation and corruption	——, 2.15–17	——, 2.4	——, 2.4
Celestial spheres revolve perpetually (*dāʾiman*)	Treated in metaphysics	——, 2.5	——, 2.5
The celestial spheres move by volition	Treated in metaphysics	——, 2.6	——, 2.6
Celestial spheres' motive power is immaterial, i.e., an intellect	Treated in metaphysics	——, 2.7	——, 2.7
Celestial spheres' proximate mover is a corporeal power, i.e., a soul	Treated in metaphysics	——, 2.8	——, 2.7
Elements and mixtures	——, 2.18–22	*Fann* 3.1	*Fann* 3.1–2
On Simple elements			——, 3.1
On mixture			——, 3.2
Composites bodies			——, 3.2.1
Whether the forms of the simple elements are retained in composites			——, 3.2.2

Table 24.1 (Continued)

Subject content	*Ishārāt*	*Hidāya*	*Hadiyya*
The magnitudes of the qualities of simple bodies in mixtures			——, 3.2.3
The mixture of the human body and temperaments	Cf. *namaṭ* 2.27		——, 3.2.4
Meteorological phenomena	——, 2.23–25	——, 3.2	——, 3.3
Geology	——, 2.23–25	——, 3.3	——, 3.4
Botany	*Namaṭ* 3	——, 3.4	——, 3.5
The true nature of the plant soul			——, 3.5.1
The faculty of the plant soul			——, 3.5.2
Biology and zoology	*Namaṭ* 3	——, 3.5	——, 3.6
The five external senses			——, 3.6.1
The five external sense organs			——, 3.6.2
The objects of sensation			——, 3.6.3
Human psychology	*Namaṭ* 3	——, 3.6	——, 3.7
The soul is other than a mixture			——, 3.7.1
The soul is other than a body			——, 3.7.2
The soul is separate from matter			——, 3.7.3
The soul temporally originates			——, 3.7.4
On the essential sameness and difference of souls			——, 3.7.5
Whether souls undergo motion in the body			——, 3.7.6 (appendix)
The persistence of the soul after the destruction of the body			——, 3.7.7 (appendix)
Whether souls perceiving particulars or only universals			——, 3.7.8 (appendix)
On the soul's association with the body			——, 3.7.9 (appendix)
Ranks of the soul with respect to their perception			——, 3.7.10 (appendix)

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CHAPTER 25

HAJI MULLĀ HĀDĪ SABZAWĀRĪ (D. 1878), *GHURAR AL-FARĀʾID*

FATEMEH FANA

25.1. Life

Mullā Hādī, son of Mahdī Sabzawārī, was born in the year 1212/1797–98 in Sabzawār. His year of birth roughly coincides with the assassination of Āghā Muḥammad Khān, the founder of the Qājār dynasty and the accession of Fatḥ ʿAlī Shāh Qājār (r. 1212/1797–1250/1834). His father and ancestors were among the charitable and pious nobles, landowners, and traders of Sabzawār. His mother, Zīnat al-Ḥājjiya was also from a wealthy and religious family. Sabzawārī began his studies in Arabic grammar at the age of seven. He was eight years old when his father died. At the age of ten he set out from Sabzawār to Mashhad with his cousin, Ḥusayn Sabzawārī. After ten years of residence in Mashhad, where he studied introductory lessons on Arabic literature, jurisprudence, theology, logic, and related subjects with his cousin, he returned to Sabzawār (ca. 1232/1817) and married. Afterward, he set out for the hajj (ca. 1233–34/1817–19). However, since he had heard of the renown of the seminary of Isfahan and of the flourishing of the study of philosophy there, he decided to visit that city on his way to Mecca. When he arrived in Isfahan, he attended the classes of Mullā Ismāʿīl 'Wāḥid al-ʿAyn' Darbkūshkī Iṣfahānī (d. 1239–40/1823–24), who was one of the most eminent students of Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (d. 1246/1830–31), for a few days. He was so impressed by the way Mullā Ismaʿīl taught and treated his students that he decided to delay the performance of the hajj and to remain in Isfahan to continue studying philosophy. Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī lived in Isfahan for eight years, studying philosophy and the rational sciences with Darbkūshkī Iṣfahānī for five years until the latter's death, and then continuing to studying philosophy with Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī for around another three years. In the first two years of his stay in Isfahan, Sabzawārī also studied an hour of jurisprudence daily with Āqā Muḥammad ʿAlī Najafī (d. 1245/1829) (Ghanī 1944, 46; Sabzawārī, *Metaphysics*, 12). According to Sabzawārī's son-in-law, he would attend the classes of Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī, or Karbāsī (d. 1262/1845–46), and Muḥammad Taqī Iṣfahānī at the beginning of his arrival to Isfahan. Sabzawārī's son-in-law has narrated that, on Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī's recommendation, Sabzawārī also attended the lessons of Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī (d. 1241/1826) for fifty-three days (Sabzawārī, *Metaphysics*, 13–14).

In conjunction with learning the theoretical sciences, Sabzawārī also gave great importance to spiritual wayfaring (*sulūk-i maʿnawī*) and as such also underwent training in the mystical sciences. However, there is little information about his teachers in this regard. From his autobiography it can only be gathered that during his residence in Mashhad, in addition to studying the exoteric sciences with his cousin Ḥusayn Sabzawārī, he was also engaged in spiritual exercises for the purification of the soul and spiritual growth, and his period of studies in Isfahan were also complemented with spiritual practice in the same way (Ghanī 1944, 46; Sabzawārī, *Metaphysics*, 12). We have no evidence to determine whether or not this means that he was following a specific Sufi order and was a personal disciple of a shaykh of one of these orders. From the works of Sabzawārī we can infer that he was aware of important sources in the field of theoretical mysticism, such as the works of Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 637/1240) and some of his commentators. According to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ashtiyānī, Sabzawārī did not attended seminary courses on mysticism in which Sufi books were taught. According to this perspective, his knowledge of mysticism and Sufism would have been limited to those mystical issues that are in the books of Mullā Ṣadrā, though he did certainly have a taste for such issues (Sabzawārī, *Rasāʾil*, 1:121).

In the year 1242/1826, subsequent to completing his studies, Sabzawārī set out for Mashhad to teach, instructing in philosophy, jurisprudence, and exegesis at the School of Ḥājj Ḥasan for five years (Sabzawārī, *Rasāʾil*, 1:118). Then in 1247/1831 he returned to his hometown, and after a year or two, around the year 1248 or 1249/1832–33, he prepared to make the hajj with his wife, who passed away in the course of this journey. Since his return from hajj coincided with the death of Fatḥ ʿAlī Shāh Qājār and travel had become unsafe, he was forced to stop in Kerman, and there resided in the Maʿsūmiyya School for approximately a year. During this stay, Sabzawārī remarried. In the year 1251/1834–35, or the early part of 1252/1835–36, after travel conditions became less dangerous, he returned with his new wife to Sabzawār. After about ten months teaching in Mashhad, he returned permanently to Sabzawār, where he taught at the seminary of Ḥājj ʿAbd al-Ṣāniʿ Faṣīḥī, called the Faṣīḥiyya Madrasa, until the end of his life (Ghanī 1944, 47; Asrārī-Sabzawārī 1991, 212). Later this school became renowned as the Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī School. Despite the existence of the great philosophical seminaries of Tehran and Isfahan in that same period, after a short time the reputation of Sabzawārī attracted students of philosophy from all around Iran, and even some students from neighboring countries, as Sabzawār became the gathering place of notable scholars (Comte de Gobineau 1900, 99; Asrārī-Sabzawārī 1991, 211). As Edward Browne relates from his teacher, Mīrzā Asad Allāh Sabzawārī, who was among the students of Hājj Mullā Sabzawārī:

> During the day he used to give two lectures, each of two hours' duration. . . . The complete course of instruction in philosophy which he gave lasted seven years, at the end of which period those students who had followed it diligently were replaced by others. (Browne 1950, 144–45)

Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī passed away on 28 Dhū'l-Ḥijja 1289 / 26 February 1873, when he was close to seventy-eight years old, according to the lunar calendar, and seventy-five years old according to the solar calendar. (See also Riḍānizhād 1992; Ṣadūqī-Suhā 2002.)

25.2. Works

Approximately fifty works of Ḥakīm Sabzawārī, including independent works, shorter tracts, commentaries, and glosses, have survived on a wide range of subjects including philosophy and logic, theology, mysticism, jurisprudence, *ḥadīth*, and literature, in both Persian and Arabic. Among these works, it is his books on philosophy that have received by far the most attention. The most important of these, on which the present chapter focuses, is the *Ghurar al-farā'id* (*The Blazes of the Pearls*), a didactic poem on the various branches of philosophy also known as the *Manẓūma* (*fī'l-ḥikma*), which is paired with *al-La'ālī al-muntaẓima* (*The Strung Pearls*) or *Manẓūma fī'l-manṭiq* on logic. These two works are accompanied by an autocommentary known as *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* (henceforth *Commentary*), and a *Ta'liqa* (henceforth *Gloss*). Both the poem and the commentary have been commented upon extensively by later scholars up to the present. Sabzawārī's other works include commentaries on several Shīʿī supplications, including the *Jawshan al-Kabīr*, the *Asrār al-ḥikam*, a commentary on the *Mathnawī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, glosses and commentaries on several of Mullā Ṣadrā's works, a collection of shorter treatises in Persian and Arabic, and a *Dīwān* of poetry. (For a full bibliography see Sabzawārī, *Metaphysics*, 26–28.)

25.3. *Ghurar al-Farā'id* and the Principles of Sabzawārī's Philosophical Thought

The era of the history of philosophical thought with which Sabzawārī is associated had just witnessed the beginnings of the revival and propagation of Mullā Sadra's transcendent philosophy by leading philosophers such as Muḥammad Bīdābādī (d. 1197/1783) and his disciple, Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (Ṣadūqī-Suhā 1381/2002, 95, 143–55). However, neither philosophy in general nor Sadrian thought in particular were commonly taught in the institutions of religious education. The words of Sabzawārī in the prologue of the *Commentary* on *Ghurar al-farāʾid* indicate the neglect of philosophy during that period:

> This era is a period of famine for philosophy, as certainty's rain scarcely falls from the clouds of mercy. The cause of this is the abundant sins of the heedless and the ignorant. (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:37)

Indeed, Sabzawārī announces his motivation for writing this book as follows: although philosophy and particularly metaphysics should be a place of refuge, philosophy had been nearly forgotten (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:38–39). Revealing the state of philosophy at the time, these statements also help us to understand why Sabzawārī only mentions learning the philosophy of illumination as his motive for traveling to Isfahan, failing to mention Mullā Ṣadrā's transcendent philosophy.

Sabzawārī cannot be considered the founder of an independent school or an innovator on the basis of his philosophical works. In his general principles and the framework of his philosophy he adheres to the system of transcendent philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā, notwithstanding certain specific criticisms of some of Mullā Ṣadrā's arguments and positions and an inclination toward the Illuminationist tradition. Sabzawārī's profound understanding of the transcendent philosophy and his skill in teaching and commenting upon it was such that after Mullā Ṣadrā himself, Sabzawārī is generally considered to have played one of the most important roles in the development and propagation of this school, though of course the roles of others should not be forgotten, such as Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī and Mullā Ismaʿīl Darbkūshkī, who caused the philosophical seminary of Isfahan to flourish and who trained such distinguished students as Sabzawārī himself, Āghā ʿAlī Mudarris Ṭehrānī (d. 1307/1889), and his father, Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Zunūzī (d. 1257/1841).

However, perhaps even more important than the number of students that Sabzawārī trained, which may be close to a thousand, is the *Ghurar al-farāʾid* and his own *Commentary* upon it. This text, which is a relatively systematic summary of and introduction to Mullā Ṣadrā's magnum opus, the *Asfār*, has been more influential than any other work in the school after Mullā Ṣadrā himself. Though there may be works that contain contributions of greater scholarly value, none can compare in comprehensiveness to the *Ghurar al-farāʾid* and its *Commentary*. It is for this reason that since it was written this text has been taught continuously, still taking a central place in many of the philosophy curricula of seminaries and universities as an authoritative introduction to the understanding of Mullā Ṣadrā's school.

Consideration of the philosophical poem, *Ghurar al-farāʾid,* and Sabzawārī's own explanations of it will allow us to introduce and analyze the major principles and foundations of Sabzawārī's philosophical thought.

25.4. A Review of the Preface of *Ghurar al-farāʾid* and the *Commentary*

Like other Islamic texts, the preface of the *Commentary* on *Ghurar al-farāʾid* begins by praising God and sending salutations upon the Prophet, his family, and his companions and followers, though Sabzawārī accomplishes this with a rhymed prose that is laced with mystical allusions. After the comments on the state of philosophy in his age and declaration of his motivation for writing the work described above, Sabzawārī encourages seekers and learners to read and memorize his poem that includes extensive meanings with few words, and he enjoins the learning of philosophy and the perfection of the belief in the unity of God and religious doctrines for attracting divine favor and mercy and likewise for purification and struggle against the lower self.

The preface to *Ghurar al-farāʾid* comprises fourteen couplets, of which the first three praise God using the literary device of "excellence of beginning" (*barāʿat al-istihlāl*), alluding to key points of the theoretical discussions that are to come in the book. By considering these allusions we are able to understand many aspects of the way Sabzawārī viewed his work:

yā wāhib al-ʿaqli laka al-maḥāmidu
ilā janābikaʼntahā ʻl-maqāṣidu (2:35)

Oh Bestower of intellect, Thine is all praise,
Toward Thy exalted presence is the end of all ends.

Here, *wāhib* (Bestower)—as the active noun derived from *hiba* (gift), a synonym for *jūd*, which is given a philosophical definition by Sabzawārī following Ibn Sina's *Remarks and Admonitions* (Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt*, 3: 145)—signifies that God gives without any ulterior motive. *ʿAql* (intellect) either signifies the Universal Intellect or denotes the intellectual faculty and the human rational soul that attains the perfection appropriate to it through theoretical and practical philosophy. But in this hemistich human intellect is more appropriate as a foreshadowing of the subject matter of the book (another example of "excellence of beginning") (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:41–44). Sabzawārī explains that this verse as a whole is an allusion to the fact that God is the origin (in the first hemistich) and the end and final point of the journey of the self-perfection of all existence (in the second hemistich) (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:44).

yā man huwa ʻkhtafā li-farṭi nūrihi
al-ẓāhiru ʻl-bāṭinu fī ẓuhūrihi (2:35)

O He who is hidden through the intensity of His light,
The Manifest Concealed in His own manifestation.

Here Sabzawārī attributes the reason for the hiddenness of God to the intensity of His manifestation and luminosity. Indeed, he denies any kind of veil from the essence of God with the expression "through the intensity of His light"; there is no veil between God and His creation save the intensity of His manifestation and our incapacity to perceive the true nature (*kunh*) of His essence. How could it be possible for limited and finite beings to attain the limitless and infinite God? (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:44–45).

bi nūri wajhihi ʿstanāra kulla shayʾ
wa-ʿinda nūri wajhihi siwāhu fayʾ (2:35)

Everything is illuminated by the light of His face
And in the light of His face, all else is but shadow.

What the text intends by "the light of His face" is the light of ever-spreading existence, which has been referred to in the Qurʾānic verse, "Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of God" (Q. 2:115). He uses the word "light" to refer to existence because light is both evident in itself and also makes other things evident, and both characteristics are also true of existence. This is because existence is both evident in itself, in the sense that it is self-existent, and also makes quiddities evident, in the sense that it mediates their existence (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:46, 46 n. 31). "The light of the divine face" is the same as the ever-spreading existence because the face is that through which one thing encounters another, and God encounters contingent beings through the mediation of the ever-spreading existence (Shīrāzī 2008, 1:11). The light of existence that is spread upon contingent quiddities is also called the Holy Emanation, the Breath of the All-Merciful, the all-encompassing Mercy, and the matter of matters (*māddat al-mawādd*) (Haydajī 1363, 138).

This couplet also alludes to the oneness of being, the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), and the mentally posited (*iʿtibārī*) nature of quiddity, which are among the principles and foundations of the thought of Sabzawārī as a follower of the transcendent philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. In particular, Sabzawārī's comment that everything, insofar as its particular existence or its quiddity is concerned, is a shadow (*fayʾ*) when compared to the light of the Divine Face, refers to the oneness of the reality of existence. Furthermore, describing quiddity as darkness refers to the fact that it is mentally posited, and hence that existence is fundamentally real, as will be discussed below (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:46).

According to Mīrzā Mahdī Ashtīyānī, Sabzawārī wrote his book for the theoretical wayfarers (*sālikān-i naẓarī*) and, as Mullā Ṣadrā did with the *Asfār*, arranged it in accordance with the four journeys of the practical wayfarers (*ahl-i sulūk-i ʿamalī*). Accordingly, in this preface Sabzawārī has elegantly alluded to these journeys, such that the first couplet refers to the first journey: the journey from creation to the Real (i.e., God); the second couplet refers to the second journey: the journey from the Real to the Real; the first hemistich of the third couplet refers to the third journey: the journey from the Real to creation; and finally, the second hemistich of the third couplet refers to the fourth journey: the journey with the Real from the creation to the creation (Āshtiyānī, *Taʿlīqa*, 30–32).

Continuing his preface to *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, Sabzawārī mentions his own name, the topic of the book, the name of the book, the reason for its name, and the section and chapter divisions of the book. The larger sections are named *maqṣad*, or "place that is aimed for," and each shorter group of chapters is called a *farīda*, or "unique pearl," with each chapter being a *ghurar*, or "blaze." He introduces the *Ghurar al-farāʾid* as a healing for the illness of ignorance, and explains this by discussing the lofty and noble nature of philosophy, which leads mankind to its ultimate end and theoretical and practical goals. This explanation begins with a citation from the Qurʾān, which asserts the divine origin of philosophy: "He gives the Wisdom to whomsoever he will, and whoever is given the Wisdom has been given much good" (Q. 2:269). Philosophy leads to "much good" because the knowledge that results from it is precisely the "faith" (*īmān*) that is referred to in the Qurʾān by verses such as "And the believers, all of who believe in God and His angels and His messengers" (Q. 2:285). Likewise it is "much good" because by learning it one's intellectual world comes to be similar to the concrete and extramental world. Furthermore, philosophy is the highest science, for the knowledge that results from it, unlike that of other sciences, is certain and involves no blind imitation. Accordingly, philosophy can be considered the superior science on the basis of all three of the traditional criteria by which any science is evaluated, namely through the excellence of its subject matter, the reliability of its proofs, and the nobility of its destination and objective (cf. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ilāhīyyāt*, 15).

25.5. The Chapter and Section Divisions of the *Ghurar al-farāʾid* and Its *Commentary*

The *Ghurar al-farāʾid* and its *Sharḥ* include seven *maqṣads*: The first *maqṣad*, comprised of seven *farīda*s, deals with "general principles," or *metaphysica generalis* (*al-umūr al-ʿāmma*), that is, the universal attributes of existence *as such* that do not depend in their predication on existence being specifically mathematical or physical (Shirāzī, *Asfār*, 1:28–30). As some have stated, what is intended by general principles are those principles that include all existents or most existents. For example, existence includes necessary and contingent, and contingent includes substance and accidents. Likewise, existence includes cause and effect, unity and multiplicity, and eternal and temporally created, and so forth (Āmulī, *Taʿlīqa*, 1:17). For this reason, in the general principles of philosophy, ontology is put first, is given priority, and is the topic of the greatest number of discussions. In addition to discussions about existence, the first *farīda* of the first *maqṣad* also includes sections on nonexistence and nonexistent entities, the criterion of truth of a proposition, and the nature of quiddity and its concomitants, due to the intimate relationship of these issues with ontology. The second *maqṣad*, comprised of four *farīdas*, deals with substance and accidents and their divisions. The third *maqṣad*, as is indicated by the title, "Metaphysics in the Specific Sense" (*al-ilāhiyyāt bi'l-maʿnā' l-akhaṣṣ, Metaphysica specialis*), deals with properties of the Necessary of Existence by-itself (*bi'l-dhāt*), the proof of Its existence and unity, and Its attributes and actions in three *farīdas*. In this *maqṣad*, Sabzawārī also discusses emanation and the occurrence of multiplicity as a result of the world being the act of God.

On the basis of Sabzawārī's explanation in the *Gloss on the Commentary of the Ghurar al-farāʾid* it is clear that he accepts the traditional classification of philosophy among the Muslim philosophers prior to himself. This classification is the division of theoretical philosophy into three branches: (1) primary philosophy, or the highest science, which is also called metaphysics; (2) middle philosophy, which includes mathematics, that is, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy; and (3) lower, that is, natural, philosophy. This division was developed on the basis of the either the real or natural ranking of the subject matters of each these three branches or the order in which they are learned. According to Sabzawārī's explanation in this gloss, primary philosophy, meaning discussions that were raised in the first two *maqṣads*, is also referred to as "metaphysics in the general sense," for its subject is the existent as such, that is, the existent meant absolutely, unqualified by any particularity. This stands in contrast to "metaphysics in the specific sense," which has as its subject the existent in its particularity of essential necessity, such that its subject is the Necessary of Existence by-itself (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:502). For this reason, metaphysics consists of two parts, general and specific, determined by the extent of their subject matter.

Sabzawārī does not deal with mathematics in the *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, and it seems that he did not write anything on this branch of knowledge. Likewise, in his biography there is no evidence that he taught mathematics.

The next part of his book, namely the fourth *maqṣad*, is on natural philosophy. It has seven *farīdas* (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:204 ff.). The fifth *maqṣad*, which has three *farīdas*, is about prophecy, speaking of the unseen, and dreams. The sixth *maqṣad* discusses the Return to God (*maʿād*), and the seventh *maqṣad* consists of selected discussions on ethics with a mystical tinge.

Since it will not be possible to review the entire text of the *Ghurar al-farāʾid* and its *Commentary*, we will select key discussions and issues in these texts concerning ontology and theology, paying particular attention to Sabzawārī's Ṣadrian perspective and approach.

The ontology of the transcendent philosophy is primarily distinguished from previous philosophical traditions, particularly Avicennan Peripatetic philosophy and Suhrawardi's Illuminationist philosophy, on the basis of three principles. These fundamental principles of the ontology of the transcendent philosophy, adhered to by Sabzawārī in the *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, are the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), the unity of the reality of existence (*waḥdat ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*), and gradation in the levels of being (*tashkīk al-wujūd*).

25.6. The Primacy of Existence

Sabzawārī presents the theory of the primacy of existence in *Ghurar al-farāʾid* very early on, despite the fact that some of his arguments require premises that will only be proven later. He is compelled to do this because the acceptance of either the primacy of existence or its alternative, the primacy of quiddity, is a determining factor in how most of the fundamental issues of ontology will be presented. In the second *Ghurar* of the text, Sabzawārī sets forth his position with this couplet:

> *inna al-wujūd ʿindanā aṣīlun*
> *dalīlu man khālafanā ʿalīlun* (2:63)
>
> Existence in our opinion is primary,
> The argument of those who oppose us is faulty.

The *Commentary* begins its explanation of his position by describing the origin of the problem of primacy of existence versus quiddity in the following principle: "Every contingent entity is a composite pair, having quiddity and existence" (*kull mumkin zawj*^{un} *turakkibiyy*^{un} *lahu māhiyya wa-wujūd*), which is found in Ibn Sina's *Metaphysics of the Healing* (Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ilāhīyyāt*, 37–47). This principle leads us to ask which part of this composite pair is primary or fundamentally real, in the sense of being the basis of the reality or actuality of the contingent entity in question. The converse of the term "primary" (*aṣīl*) is "mentally posited" (*iʿtibārī*), which means "abstracted" in the sense that it does not have any actuality in the external world of itself (*dhātan*), though there is something actual in the external world from which it is abstracted, and accordingly it exists as subsidiary to that source of its abstraction. Accordingly, when it comes to the question of the primacy of existence or quiddity, the issue to be considered is whether the actuality in the external world of the entity that we have judged to be actual is from existence or quiddity, and conversely which of these two is the source of its abstracted and mentally posited aspect.

Before proceeding, Sabzawārī clarifies the term "quiddity," which has a number of usages. The most important of these are "quiddity in the particular sense," meaning "that which is said in response to the question 'What is it?'" (*mā yuqāl fī jawāb mā huwa*); and "quiddity in the general sense," meaning "that by which a thing is itself" (*mā bihi 'l-shayʾ huwa huwa*), which refers to both real existence and the quiddity in the particular sense. Sabzawārī clarifies that the point at issue concerns "quiddity in the particular sense," which is also called the "natural universal" (*al-kullī 'l-ṭabīʿī*), because it is only in this sense that the opposition between existence and quiddity is meaningful (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:64–65, 65 n. 2).

Sabzawārī describes three possible answers to the question of primacy:

1. Both existence and quiddity are primary or fundamentally real.
2. Existence is primary whereas quiddity is mentally posited.
3. Quiddity is primary and existence is mentally posited.

According to the *Commentary*, no philosopher believes that they are both primary, though Sabzawārī does mention that one of his contemporaries holds this position, adding that this individual should not be counted among those with a firm grasp of philosophical principles (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:65 n. 3). In his gloss on the text, Haydajī suggests that Sabzawārī is alluding to Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsāʾī (Haydajī 1363, 147). In any case, Sabzawārī narrates that this person's proof is as follows: since existence is the source of good and quiddity is the source of evil, and since both good and evil are primary and fundamentally real matters, the sources of each, namely existence and quiddity, should both be considered primary.

To disprove this, in addition to indicating some of the fallacious consequences of this theory, Sabzawārī offers the following argument: An evil is simply the nonexistence or lack of realization of a possible existential good (*ʿadam al-malaka*). Since evils are nonexistent and nonexistential (*ʿadamī*) their cause is nonexistent and nonexistential. This argument is in fact Sabzawārī's first proof for the primacy of existence and the mentally posited nature of quiddity (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:65–66).

The remaining two positions regarding primacy, namely the primacy of existence and the primacy of quiddity, are indeed adhered to by various philosophers according to Sabzawārī. In addition to Mullā Ṣadrā and Sabzawārī himself, the primacy of existence is also adhered to by "the verifiers among the Peripatetics," by which he means those Peripatetic philosophers who have solved philosophical issues and attained perception of reality through proof and demonstration, rather than mere imitation (*taqlīd wa-iqnāʿ*).

The alternative position, that quiddity is primary and existence is mentally posited—referred to in the *Ghurar al-farāʾid* with the words, "The argument of those who oppose us is faulty"—is claimed by Sabzawārī to be the position of *shaykh al-ishrāq* Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī. Suhrawardī argues that if existence (*wujūd*) is realized or pertains in the extramental world, then it is existent (*mawjūd*). An existent is a "thing that possesses existence" (*shayʾ lahu ʾl-wujūd*), and therefore existence possesses an existence additional to itself. This second existence must be an existent, and therefore possess a third existence, and so forth without end. Therefore, the realization of existence as an extramental reality is impossible (cf. Suhrawardī, *Muṣannafāt*, 2:64–67).[1]

Sabzawārī rejects Suhrawardī's argument by declaring that existence is existent in itself without the mediacy of another existence. As Sabzawārī adds, this insight is equivalent to realizing that whiteness is white by its own essence, not by the addition of another whiteness to it, and that the priority and posteriority of moments of time result from the very nature of time and not through the mediacy of another time frame.

Considering the refutation of Suhrawardī's argument to be sufficient as a response to the major arguments for the primacy of quiddity, Sabzawārī presents six arguments for his own position, of which we will discuss the first three, which are stated succinctly in the poem as follows:

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[1] Suhrawardī's argument itself does not in fact imply that he was a proponent of the primacy of quiddity. However, later philosophers, including Sabzawārī, have considered his argument for the "mentally posited" (*iʿtibārī*) nature of existence to amount to the same thing.

> *li-annahu manbaʿu kulli sharafin* (2:63)
>
> Because existence is the source of all values. (Cf. Sabzawārī, *Metaphysics*, 33)

As mentioned above, Sabzawārī's first argument is that existence is the source and origin of all goodness. He mentions that philosophers have considered it to be self-evident that existence is good, while also stating that there is no goodness or value in something that is merely mentally posited. If existence was purely mentally posited, how could it be the origin of goodness? (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:68).

> *wa'l-farqu bayn naḥwayi 'l-kawni yafī* (2:63)
>
> The distinction between the two modes of existence fully suffices.
> (Cf. Sabzawārī, *Metaphysics*, 34)

This argument derives from the issue of mental existence, which Sabzawārī will discuss in detail in a subsequent section. The argument revolves around the distinction between two modes of existence, namely mental and extramental. The fundamental distinction between objects in these two modes is that extramental entities possess specific and expected results, whereas the mental existence of the same entity does not have these results. For example, fire heats and burns in its extramental existence, while it does neither of these when it exists in the mind. Now, the quiddity is identical in both of the two modes of existence without any distinction (a point that is accepted by both those who accept the primacy of existence and those who accept the primacy of quiddity). Accordingly, if quiddity were to be primary and the basis of reality, then it should be the source of identical real effects in both modes of existence. Since this is not the case—since the effects of mental and extramental fire are quite different—quiddity must not be primary and existence must be primary (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:68–69).

> *kadhā luzūm al-sabqi fī 'l-ʿilliyya*
> *maʿa ʿadami 'l-tashkīk fī 'l-māhiyya* (2:63)
>
> Likewise the necessity of priority in causal relationship, while quiddity
> admits of no gradation.

This argument is also based on two premises that will be discussed later and are now taken as borrowed axioms (*aṣl mawḍūʿī*):

> First Premise: A cause has essential priority over its effect.
>
> Second Premise: Gradation in quiddity is absurd.

Although the Peripatetics consider the falseness of gradation in quiddity to be certain, Suhrawardī and his followers consider it acceptable (Suhrawardī, *Muṣannafāt*, 2:76–77). As a result, since the impossibility of gradation in quiddity is one of the premises of Sabzawārī's third argument (and likewise the forth), it is not effective against the Illuminationist philosophers. This argument is therefore directed against those who oppose the primacy of existence and yet affirm the impossibility of gradation in quiddity. Given that Sabzawārī's third argument depends on the impossibility of gradation in quiddity, it is necessary to prove this point before explaining it.

Gradation in quiddity would mean that it is possible for a quiddity to encompass levels of intensity (*shidda*) and diminution or weakness (*ḍaʿf*). Take, for instance, the quiddity of human: when we say that this quiddity is predicated by gradation, it means that the quiddity of human possesses intensity and diminution with respect to its individuals (*afrād*) such as Zayd, Bakr, and Ḥasan. The quiddity of human in Zayd, for instance, may be more intense than the quiddity of human in Bakr, and hence in Bakr it is weaker than in Zayd, and so forth for the other individuals. Now, we must ask which is the constituent of the essence of human qua human? Is it the level of intensity that belongs to Zayd or other levels as exist in other individuals? Or is the level of intensity extrinsic to quiddity? If the level of intensity is intrinsic to and constituent of the quiddity, the lower intensity of "humanness" does not contain the constituent of the quiddity. In this case, the attribution and predication of man to Bakr in the above example would be false, because he would lack a constituent of the quiddity of human, which is contrary to what we presupposed. But if we say that the weak level is constituent of the quiddity, then the intense level is extrinsic to it and then gradation is not in fact within the essence of the quiddity, and we have again contradicted our presupposition. The judgment that there is gradation in quiddity therefore itself brings us to the conclusion that there is no gradation in quiddity, and therefore the latter position is proven.

To return to Sabzawārī's third argument, let us suppose that there is a relationship of causality between two individuals of the same special quiddity (*māhiyya nawʿiyya*), as, for example, one individual fire causing another, or between two individuals that share a genus, such as matter and form that share the genus "substance" and together are the cause of bodies, or the causality between the First Intellect and the Second, which likewise share the genus "substance." According to the first premise mentioned above, there must be essential priority of the cause in relation to its effect. To take the first example, according to Premise 1, there must be essential priority of the fire that is the cause with respect to the fire that is its effect. If existence were mentally posited and quiddity were primary, the same specific quiddity of fire would be both essentially prior as cause and posterior as effect. The quiddity of fire as such would be prior to the quiddity of fire as such. However, since something cannot be prior to itself, this would only be possible if there is gradation in quiddity. Furthermore, the same argument would apply between a cause and its effect that share the genus "substance." Accordingly, the essential priority of cause and effect implies either that one who accepts the primacy of quiddity must accept gradation in quiddity, which as shown above is not an attractive position, or that existence is primary (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2: 69).

25.7. The Unity of the Reality of Existence and Gradation in Its Levels

The discussion of the primacy of existence is in fact found in the second *ghurar* of the *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, the first *ghurar* having dealt with the self-evident nature of the concept of existence. Following these two topics, the third *ghurar* addresses the question of the univocality (*ishtirāk maʿnawī*) of existence, namely whether the concept "existence" is applied synonymously to all existents. The self-evident nature and the univocality of "existence" have also been propounded by prior philosophical traditions. As far as the self-evident nature of "existence" is concerned, it could be said that all of the philosophers take it as certain. However, regarding the univocality of existence there is a difference of view among the philosophers. Generally, the philosophers who are closer to theological (*kalāmī*) thought and take an approach in ontology and discussions on the nature of God that emphasizes divine transcendence are opposed to the theory of the univocality of existence, believing that if existence is predicated with a single meaning of all existents—whether contingent or necessary—this would entail rendering God similar (*tashbīh*) to His creation. Mullā Ṣadrā and the followers of the transcendent philosophy, on the other hand, consider existence to be univocal. Indeed, this subject possesses a special significance in the transcendent philosophy, such that Sabzawārī believed it to be among the fundamental philosophical questions (*ummahāt*) and one of the necessary foundations for presenting the theory of gradation in existence—which he speaks of as the truth of the school of the Pahlavi philosophers. The role of the univocality of existence in affirming the unity of the reality of existence and the gradation in its levels results from the following consideration:

> If a single concept is applied to all existents in the same way, this single notion must not be abstracted from the realities of those existents insofar as they differ from one another. Rather, the fact that the concept "existence" has a single meaning, means that a single concept is the basis of the mental abstraction through which the concept has been attained, and therefore the reality of existence itself must also be one. At the same time, the distinction and the multiplicity that are perceived in the instances (*maṣādīq*) of existence is precisely the distinction and multiplicity of the levels of that same single reality and stems from the gradation in the levels of existence. (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:78–79)

The question of multiplicity and unity in the reality of being—whether existence as such is multiple or singular—is considered to be one of the most important discussions of philosophy. Given that the answers of various philosophers to this question differ, Sabzawārī analyzes a variety of responses that he considers most important. He first presents the view that he states belonged to the "Pahlavi philosophers"—by which he means the pre-Islamic Iranian thinkers—which concurs with his own view, and then he engages in a critical analysis of some other statements that he considers faulty (*makhdūsh*).

> *al-fahlawiyyūna ʾl-wujūdu ʿindahum*
> *ḥaqīqatun dhātu tashakkukin taʿumm*
> *marātiban ghinan wa faqran takhtalif*
> *kaʾl-nūri ḥaythumā taqawwā wa ḍaʿif* (2:104)
>
> According to the Pahlavi philosophers,
> Existence is a reality, all-encompassing, having gradation
> Comprising degrees, in independence and dependence,
> Varying like light, as it becomes strong or weak.

In the *Commentary*, Sabzawārī explains that the differences of degrees of existence are not purely determined by independence (*ghinā*) and dependence (*faqr*) (which is the kind of difference implied by the duality, necessary vs. contingent). Rather, the degrees of the reality of existence differ in terms of intensity and weakness, priority and posteriority, and perfection and imperfection. The analogy of light, which has degrees of intensity and weakness, is used to elucidate this point. However, this is more than just an analogy, for he adds that what is intended by light is the real light, which is precisely the reality of existence. This nomenclature is appropriate because in the same way that light is evident in itself and makes evident what is other than itself, the reality of existence is likewise manifest in itself and makes manifest what is other than itself, namely the quiddities of incorporeal beings and material objects. "Real light" is an expression that Suhrawardī had employed instead of "existence" in his Illuminationist philosophy. Indeed, Sabzawārī reminds us in his *Gloss* that Suhrawardī believed in gradation—technically defined as a distinction in which the distinguishing factor is the same as the unifying factor (i.e., in this case light both distinguishes two intensities of light and places them within a single category). That is to say, where Mullā Ṣadrā and Sabzawārī speak of gradation in existence, Suhrawardī speks of gradation in the degrees of real lights (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:105–6 n. 4).

To return to Sabzawārī's use of the symbolism of light, just as the differences between lights are not differences of species (for a weak light is the same species as a strong light), the differences in existences (*wujūdāt*) are also not (primarily) differences of species such as are distinguished by their differentia. The reality of light is that it is self-manifest and manifests other than itself, a characteristic that is common to all degrees of light, whether they be strong or weak. Accordingly, the strength and weakness of various degrees of light neither is a constituent of what it is to be light, nor does it constitute an impediment to that degree being light. The strength and weakness of light is rather constituent of the specific degree of luminosity that a particular light possesses. In the same way, the reality of existence also has different degrees, which are constituted by differences in intensity and weakness, priority and posteriority, and perfection and imperfection. However, this is not to say that each degree of existence is composite, being constituted by the combination of the reality of existence plus a particular degree of intensity or weakness; for weakness is nonexistential (*ʿadamī*). In the same way, weak light is not a composite of light and darkness, for darkness is merely the lack of light.

Considering the above, we can see that in the gradation of the reality of existence, that which is shared between existences is precisely that which necessitates the distinctions and differences between existences (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:107–11). In this type of gradation, called "specialized gradation" (*al-tashkīk al-khāṣṣī*), all existences share in the reality of existence, and yet are distinguished from each other on the basis of that very same reality of existence, not something additional to it. Accordingly, the multiplicity of levels is not incompatible with the unity of the principle of the reality of existence; rather it brings emphasis to that very fact. This stands in contrast to the other major type of gradation, "generalized gradation" (*al-tashkīk al-ʿāmmī*), in which entities are distinguished by a receptacle or an external attribute, as when a single light shines upon different objects, some polished, for example, and others unpolished. Here the difference in the luminosity of various objects results from the differences in their capacity to reflect light, and does not result from the light itself (Shīrāzī 2008, 1:127–28).

Continuing this discussion, Sabzawārī critiques two other statements concerning the issue of the oneness versus multiplicity of being. The first statement is attributed to a group of the Peripatetics, with no further discussion of their identity:

> *Wa-ʿinda mashshāʾīyyatin ḥaqāʾiqu*
> *tabāyanat wa-huwa ladayya zāhiqun* (2:104)
>
> And for some Peripatetics there are realities
> That are completely separate, and in our view this is false.

According to this view, existences are realities that are distinct and separate from one another in the entirety of their essences (*bi-tamām al-dhāt*). Their reason for holding such an opinion, as Sabzawārī relates, has several components: First, the distinction between existences cannot be a distinction of parts of the essences of each; because existence is simple, whereas distinction between parts of essences (which means distinctions between differentia, as in the difference between the essence of humans and that of any other species of animal) requires that the essences in question be composite. Furthermore, this would necessitate that absolute existence be a genus, which is absurd. Second, distinctions of existence cannot result from classifying and individuating accidents. This is because this would entail that existence be a species that is divided into classes (*aṣnāf*) and individuals by the addition of accidents that bring about distinctions. Or rather, existence would be a necessary accident for those realities, namely an accident that is abstracted from the essence of that reality itself (*ʿaraḍ khārij al-maḥmūl*) rather than an accident that is added on to its essence from without (*ʿaraḍ maḥmūl bi'l-ḍamīma*) (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:111–12; Shīrāzī 2008, 1:129).

Sabzawārī's rejection of this opinion accords with his assertion of the univocality of the concept of existence, which the Peripatetics also accept. In this regard he states:

li-anna maʿnan wāḥidan lā yuntazaʿ
mimmā lahā tawaḥḥudan mā lam yaqaʿ (2:104)

Because a single concept is not abstracted
From things between which there is no unity whatsoever.

The fact that a single concept is used to refer to two different things implies that there is some commonality between the two of them. If this were not the case, a single concept in its very singularity would refer to multiple objects in their multiplicity, and thus the concept would be simultaneously single and multiple in the same respect, which is a contradiction, just as a single number cannot be 1 and 100 at the same time. It is impossible to deny that unity and multiplicity are incompatible (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:112).

Sabzawārī expresses the second statement on the topic of the unity or multiplicity of existence that he will engage with as follows:

ka-anna min dhawqi ʾl-taʾalluhi ʿqtanaṣ
man qāla mā kāna lahu siwā ʾl-ḥiṣaṣ (2:104)

It is as if he has obtained from "the taste of divinization,"
The one who says, "[Existence] has nothing save portions."

Sabzawārī suggests that some of the theologians have been influenced by a position stated by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502) and named the "taste of divinization" (*dhawq al-taʾalluh*), and in the commentary on this verse he deals with both the position of these theologians and that of Dawānī himself. The position of these theologians is that existence does not have real individuals, whether they be essentially opposed to each other (as a group of the Peripatetics believe), or differentiated by levels of perfection and deficiency (according to the view of the "Pahlavi" philosophers). Rather, existence has "portions" (*ḥiṣaṣ*). A "portion" is the term used to signify the concept of absolute existence as it is annexed to each of the various quiddities (e.g., "the existence of the tree," "the existence of the human"). Accordingly, the theologians who hold this view consider existence to be mentally posited (*iʿtibārī*) (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:114).

For Sabzawārī, the above position, though influenced by an opinion known as "the taste of divinization," is not identical to it. Rather, the latter position – which appears to be that of Dawānī himself – affirms the "unity of existence" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and the "multiplicity of the existent" (*kathrat al-mawjūd*). Given that "existent" means " 'related to existence,' this position states that, on the one hand, existence is a self-subsistent reality that is one in all respects, such that its unity is "individual unity" (*waḥda shakhṣiyya*); and, on the other hand, multiplicity is only in the quiddities that are attributed to existence. To predicate "existent" of the reality of existence would simply mean that that single reality is none other than existence, whereas the predication of "existent" of quiddities means that they are related to existence (in the same way that the concept "'farmer" is related to "farming," "milkman" to "milk," and so forth). Sabzawārī disagrees with this position, despite its wide acceptance, because it implies a form of dualism, both implying the primacy of quiddity in one respect and the primacy of existence in another respect (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:115).

As Sabzawārī sees it, the real "taste of divinization" is his own position, namely that there is a single principle of reality rather than two principles, as he has already shown the assertion of the primacy of both existence and quiddity to be inadmissible. Given that existence is primary, the relation between existence and quiddity is through an "illuminative relation" (*al-iḍāfa al-ishrāqiyya*) rather than a relation as conceived of as one of the Aristotelian categories (*al-iḍāfa al-maqūliyya*). In the illuminative relation, both the origin of the relation (*muḍāf ilayhi*) and the relation itself (*iḍāfa*) are existence itself, while the other component of the relation (*muḍāf*) is the various aspects of existences, the essences of which are nothing other than dependence upon and need for the level of infinite existence. That is to say they are nothing other than dependence upon and relation to the single reality of being (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:116–20).

Sabzawārī's adherence to the unitarian (*waḥdat-garā*) scheme of the ontology of the transcendent philosophy—in which the actuality (*wāqiʿiyya*) of existence is the pivot upon which all of reality turns such that reality is nothing but existence and existence is nothing but one infinite reality—brings about a close relationship between ontology and philosophical theology (*khudāshināsī*). This is such that, if we wish to speak using the language of the transcendent philosophy, namely conventional philosophy that has been made transcendent, the secret and reality of this ontology would be none other than philosophical theology. This is because the one reality is pure existence, of which the essence is nothing but existence: "The Quiddity of the Real is nothing but Its ipseity" (*al-Ḥaqq māhiyatuhu inniyatuhu*) (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:96). God, the Real, is not a composite of quiddity and existence in which existence has become attributed of, and superadded to, its quiddity, as is the case for contingent entities. This is because He is the Necessary of Existence by-itself, and as such His existence has no external cause. Sabzawārī's use of the word *al-Ḥaqq* ("the Real"), has a philosophical intention behind it, regarding which he quotes a similar usage by al-Fārābī and by which he emphasizes the oneness of the reality of existence. That unitary existence is nothing but the Real, the existent that is pure actuality and which admits of no corruption, deficiency or falsehood. This is the very existence that is one by way of "the unity of the real reality" (*waḥdat al-ḥaqq al-ḥaqīqī*), about which he says in the third *farīda* of the second *maqṣad*, dealing with metaphysics in its particular sense:

mā dhātihi bi-dhātihi li-dhātihi
mawjūd al-ḥaqq al-ʿalī ṣifātihi (3:501)

That of which the Essence is by-itself and for-itself
Is the Real existence, exalted are Its attributes.

As Sabzawārī explains in his commentary, this verse is a lexical definition of (*sharḥ al-lafẓ*) of "the Necessary of Existence." What Sabzawārī means by "by-itself" (*bi-dhātihi*), is that "existent" can be attributed of the Necessary of Existence without need for any intermediary in attribution (*wāsiṭa fī ʾl-ʿurūḍ*, or " 'restrictive aspect," *ḥaythiyya taqyīdiyya*). (To explain: the attribution of movement to a moving ship is without intermediary, whereas the attribution of movement to an individual on that ship requires that one consider the ship as an intermediary for the attribution to be sound. Likewise, existence is only attributed of a contingent quiddity through the intermediacy of the actualization of the particular existence of that quiddity.) What is meant by "for-itself" (*li-dhātihi*) is that the Necessary of Existence has no need for a causal intermediary (*wāsiṭa fī ʾl-thubūt*, or "causal aspect" *ḥaythiyya taʿlīliyya*) in order to be existent, whereas all particular contingent existents do require a cause for their existence (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:503–5).

Here it is necessary to consider that the properties of quiddity and existence in contingent existents are different as far as the restrictive aspect and causal aspect. In order to say that the quiddities of contingent entities are existent, there is need of both an intermediary in attribution (i.e., a restrictive aspect) and a causal intermediary (i.e., a causal aspect), namely the cause. However, the particular contingent existences need no intermediary in attribution (restrictive aspect) in order to be said to be existent, because existence in itself (or "as such") is worthy of having "existent" predicated of it, without there being the need of any intermediary. On the one hand, contingent existences, because they are by definition dependent and are not existent "by themselves," are in need of a cause. The Necessary of Existence, on the other hand, of which the quiddity is precisely the existence and ipseity, as has been said, requires no restriction or cause to be existent.

According to the traditional sequence of questions that may be asked in an enquiry into the nature of something, after lexical definition one asks a simple 'Is it?' question (*hal basīṭa*). That is to say, one inquires into whether that thing exists or not. Sabzawārī therefore turns to the proof of the existence of the Necessary of Existence. According to the Muslim philosophers, the clearest and most decisive type of demonstration (*burhān*) for proving the existence of the Necessary is rational demonstration. Various proofs have been suggested, such as Aristotle's First Mover demonstration (which examines the efficient cause), the demonstration from the movement of the spheres (*ḥarakat al-aflāk*), and the demonstration from the rational human soul (which both examine the teleological cause). The theologians have presented the demonstration from the temporal origination of the cosmos (or the "cosmological argument"). Muslim philosophers have furthermore offered another method for proving the Necessary, namely the demonstration of the righteous (*burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*). The first to have coined this term is Ibn Sīnā in his *Remarks and Admonitions*, using this name for his own proof of the Necessary (Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 3:66). Ibn Sina's claim is that his proof is an argument for the necessity of existence from existence itself, without making anything other than existence an intermediary in the argument. He cites the Qurʾānic verse "We shall show them our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice, since He is the witness over all things?" (Q. 41:53, Pickthall) in order to affirm his view. The first part of the verse refers to a demonstration from effect to cause (*burhān innī*), and the second part, from "Does not your Lord suffice," refers to the demonstration of the righteous (Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 3:67).

Given that Ibn Sīnā's criterion from the demonstration of the righteous was that no intermediary save existence itself be used in this proof, certain later philosophers have pointed out that he was in fact not able to accomplish this. Accordingly, many philosophers have attempted to offer redactions of the demonstration that do in fact live up to this criterion. Sabzawārī himself has offered a redaction in the *Ghurar al-farāʾid* using the method of reductio ad absurdum. He also presents another demonstration for the Necessary of Existence using a direct method; that is, he attempts to prove the desired position through considering that position directly and by affirming the impossibility of circularity and infinite regress. The verse referring to this point is as follows:

Idhā ʾl-wujūdu kāna wājiban fa-hū
wa maʿa ʾl-imkāni qad istalzamahu (3:501)

If existence is necessary the conclusion is attained,
And with contingency, it is necessitated.

Sabzawārī's first redaction of the demonstration of the righteous is by way of *reductio*. This redaction is explained in the *Sharḥ* and *Gloss* as follows:

> The reality of existence, about which it has already been proven that it is primary and the source of the reality of all things, is either necessary or contingent. If it is necessary, then the desired conclusion has been proven. (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:505)

Regarding this point, Sabzawārī notes in his *Gloss*: How could this reality not be necessary, given that the nonexistence of the absolute reality of existence is impossible; and that the reality of which nonexistence is impossible is precisely the Necessary of Existence? This is because existence and nonexistence are contraries (*naqīḍ*) of each other, and nothing can accept its contrary, for "the concomitance of two contraries" (*ijtimāʿ naqīḍayn*) would result, which is impossible. Thus, given that nonexistence is impossible for the reality of existence, the contrary of nonexistence, namely the establishment of existence for existence itself is necessary. Thus the desired outcome is proven (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:505 n. 12).

Now, if we suppose that the reality of existence is contingent and not necessary, in this case the existence of the Necessary is entailed. This is because contingency here means dependence on something other than itself (hence it is named "existential and dependent contingency," *al-imkān al-faqrī wa-l-wujūdī*), rather than the specific and quiddity-related meaning of contingency, which is the negation of the necessity of both existence and nonexistence. This is because the discussion here is about the reality of existence, and the establishment of existence for existence itself is necessary, and the negation of existence from existence is impossible. Likewise, its contingency does not mean its equality in relation to existence and nonexistence. This is because the relation of something to itself is not like the relation of its contrary to it. Existence and nonexistence are contraries of one another. How could it be that the relation of existence to itself be equal to its relation to nonexistence? Now, if this reality is contingent in the sense of dependent upon other than itself, it is dependent on other than itself. "Other than a contingent existence" is either quiddity or nonexistence. If we consider the thing depended upon to be quiddity, this would entail that the being that we supposed to be contingent in its existence be dependent upon quiddity, which in its essence is neither existent nor nonexistent. And if we consider the thing depended upon to be nonexistence, this would entail that the existence that we supposed to be contingent be dependent on nonexistence, which is pure nullity and negation. Therefore it is impossible that existence be dependent upon quiddity or nonexistence. Given this, it follows that the reality of existence is dependent on the reality of existence itself; that is, that existence is both dependent on something and the thing depended upon, and this is impossible since it necessitates simultaneous duality and unity. This is because the reality of existence, which is simply existence and nothing more, has no second or repetition such that it could be dependent on it. Anything that we suppose to be the second reality of existence is precisely that same reality and no other. Therefore the supposition that the reality of existence is contingent entails an impossibility, and therefore the reality of existence is necessary (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:505–6, 506 n. 13).

The second proof that Sabzawārī presents in the *Commentary* is the following: If a level of existence is taken into consideration, this level is either necessary or contingent. If it is necessary, then that is the desired conclusion. If it is possible, then it is in need of another factor (namely a cause) to be existent. That other factor is either necessary or possible. If it is necessary, the desired conclusion is reached; and if it is possible the same enquiry regarding it is repeated. In order to avoid a vicious circle or an infinite regress, in the end we have to acknowledge the existence of the Necessary of Existence, which is independent by-itself (*bi-l-dhāt*) and in need of nothing in its existence.

In Sabzawārī's opinion, the first demonstration is stronger, superior, and more concise than the second. It is stronger and more concise because it does not involve the invalidation of the vicious cycle and infinite regress. It is superior because it only depends on the reality of existence, which is pure goodness par excellence and the source of every positive quality (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3: 506, 506 n. 14).

Moving from the proof of the existence of the Necessary to the proof of Its attributes, Sabzawārī continues:

> *wa qiss ʿalayhi kullu mā laysa ʿmtanaʿa*
> *bi-lā tajassumin ʿalā ʾl-kawni waqaʿa* (3:501)
>
> So consider analogously whatever is not impossible
> To occur for being without physicality.

The content of this verse, as Sabzawārī explains in his *Commentary*, is that one should consider each of the attributes of perfection in a way analogous to the above-mentioned consideration of existence: Taking the reality of knowledge, for instance, if it is necessary, then the desired conclusion is attained; and if it is not necessary, it entails necessity. In the same way, according to an idea that he attributes to al-Fārābī, there must be life "by-itself" (*bi-dhātihi*) in any life, will by-itself in any will, and free choice by itself in any free choice, so that these attributes might be existent in anything "by-other-than-itself" (*bi-ghayrihi*) (i.e., caused life entails uncaused life as its cause, etc.). This is because every "by-other-than-itself" must end in something that is "by-itself." In this way, having proved the Necessary of Existence, Sabzawārī proves the necessity of the existence of Its attributes of perfection using the same method (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:506).

According to the Muslim philosophers, the attributes of the Necessary of Existence by-itself are identical to Its Essence (*ʿayn-i dhāt*) and are not superadded to the essence or something other than It. What is meant by being identical (*ʿayniyya*) is that the essence of the exalted Real is an actual instance (*miṣdāq*) of these attributes, without there being any need for an intermediary in attribution, or cause, or causal intermediary, and that these attributes are abstracted from Its Essence by-itself. As such the problem of the multiplicity of the Necessary is not entailed:

> *thummaʾrjiʿan wa-waḥḥidan-hā jamʿā*
> *fī ʾl-dhāti fa-l-tukthir fī mā ʾntazaʿā* (3:501, 507)
>
> Then refer them, and declare them one, all together
> In the Essence. And make them multiple in what is abstracted."

Accordingly, the Essence of the Necessary and Its attributes—all of the attributes of perfection together—are a single unified instance (*miṣdāq*) and are identical to one another, even though they are conceptually distinct from one another. This is an issue that Sabzawārī discusses in detail in the second *farīda*, and there provides a demonstration of his position (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:549–56).

One of the most famous alternative positions regarding the attributes of the Necessary is the view of the Ashʿarite theologians who consider the attributes eternal and superadded to the essence of the Necessary Existent, entailing the existence of eight eternals—that is, the essence of the Necessary and Its seven attributes of perfection. Another historically important position is that of the Muʿtazilites who consider the essence of the Necessary to be the representative (*nāʾib*) and substitute (*jāyguzīn*) of the attributes. In reality, in their view God has no attributes, but rather the end (*ghāya*) of the attributes is in the essence. For example, this means that the properties of knowledge, which is complete accomplishment of action (*itqān dar fiʿl*), is consequent upon the essence of the Real, without It really having the attribute of knowledge. Expressed differently, they deny that God has attributes. Their error is in stating that attributes are that which subsists in something other than itself: if the attributes are identical to the essence, this entails that the attributes of the Real are both separate essences and subsistent in other than themselves, while the latter is incompatible with the former (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3: 559–60).

In accordance with the primacy of the reality of existence, Sabzawārī refutes the Muʿtazilī interpretation adding the following point: Because the reality of each attribute is existence, and existence admits gradation, each attribute admits gradation and has a vast extent (*ʿarḍ ʿarīḍ*). For example, considering the attribute of knowledge, one of its levels belongs to the category "quality" and subsists in other than itself, and another level of knowledge belongs to the Necessary and subsists by-itself; and likewise for the other attributes.

Another view that Sabzawārī mentions and considers to be "far from the inherent nature of the intellect" is the view of the Karrāmiyya, who reportedly believed in the temporal origination of the real attributes in the essence of the Real (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3: 560). As he states his own position:

mā wājibun wujūduhu bi-dhātihi
fa-wājibu ʾl-wujūd min jihātihi (3:557)

That of which the existence is necessary by itself
Is Necessary of Existence in all aspects"

That is to say, just as It is Necessary of Existence, It is Necessary of Knowledge, Necessary of Power, Necessary of Will, and so forth (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:558–60). In the remaining part of this *farīda*, Sabzawārī presents other discussions about the divisions of the attributes and the nature of each of the attributes of perfection of the Real, which we lack the opportunity to describe here.

One of the other issues of metaphysics in the particular sense that it is worth considering carefully concerns the acts of the Real, exalted be He, which is the topic of the third *farīda*. As Sabzawārī explains in the beginning of this chapter, the act of the Real is precisely the entirety of the existents of the world with all of their levels. In other words, the Real is the origin and cause of existence and the existentiation (*ījād*) of all of existents, from the highest level to the lowest, all of which proceed (*ṣudūr*) from It/Him. However, this proceeding and existentiation are according to a rational configuration (*niẓām*) and sequence, which is necessitated by the divine wisdom and providence (*ʿināya*).

Idhā ʾl-ʿināya iqtaḍat wujūdā
fa-fāḍa minhā bi-l-niẓāmi jūdā (3:664)

When the providential care necessitates an existence
It emanates from it given proper order gratuitously.

Whatever is produced from God is in the order of intensity and weakness of existence. That is to say, the nobler and higher existent is produced before the lower and less noble. This is because the nobler existent is more in accord with the Real than the less noble. Furthermore, since the arrangement of existence is the most excellent possible, this arrangement entails that the nobler will be existentiated before the less noble, for the receptivity and capacity of the nobler entity for receiving the divine emanation is greater and prior. In other words, the order that entities are produced can be considered as follows: The order of the worlds of existence, according to the gradational levels of being and the cause-effect relation between them, necessitates that there be "the noblest, followed by the next noble" (*al-ashraf fa-l-ashraf*). If there were no such cause-effect relations between the levels of being, there would be no necessity for the order of sequence in nobility to be followed. Accordingly, if it is to be the case that an existent that is an effect is to be actualized, it is necessary for its cause to be actualized prior to this. Thus, according to this "principle of the most noble contingency," the order of production and the configuration of existence is such that the first product and creation of the Real must be the most noble of possible existents. From another point of view, the "providential-caring knowledge" (*ʿilm ʿināyī*) of the Real is identical to His essence, such that God has detailed knowledge of the best configuration and this knowledge is identical to His essence. This detailed knowledge, which on the level of the essence of the Real is prior to the external existence of things, is active knowledge (*ʿilm fiʿlī*). That is to say, His knowledge becomes the cause of the actualization of His act in the external world, and this providential-caring knowledge has necessitated the existence of the acts. With the existence of the acts (i.e., "all other than God," *mā siwā Llāh*), the best configuration of existence has been emanated on the basis of this providential-caring knowledge, and this emanation is gratuitous; which is to say that it is giving without recompense or desire for something in return (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:665, 729–32).

The order of production according to the mercy of the acts of the Real is in two arcs—ascending and descending. The sequence of the descending arc is described as follows:

> *qāhirun aʿlā muthulun dhī shāriqa*
> *fa-nafsu kullin muthulun muʿallaqa*
> *fa-l-ṭabʿu fa-l-ṣūratu fa-l-hayūlā*
> *fa-'khtatama ʿl-qawlu bihā nuzūlā* (3:664)
>
> The higher dominating [intellects], [then] archetypes with illuminating rays,
> Then the Universal Soul, and [then] the suspended images,
> Then nature, then form, then prime matter,
> And the word is brought to an end with this, descending.

(1) "The higher dominating" means the vertical intellects in order, that is, the intellects between which there is a cause-effect relation. (2) The luminous archetypes, that is, the horizontal intellects, according to the terminology of the philosophy of illumination are called the "lower dominating [lights]." The collection of these two levels constitutes the 'Realm of Power' (*al-jabarūt*), in which the proceeding of the intellects occurs in accordance with the sequence of most to least noble. Accordingly, at the beginning the First Intellect is the First Proceeding Entity (*al-ṣādir al-awwal*), and then the Second Intellect, and so forth to the last of the vertical intellects, which is connected to the horizontal intellects. (3) The Universal Soul, by which is meant here the collection of all of the souls that move the celestial spheres. This level is called the "Celestial Realm" (*al-malakūt*). (4) The "suspended images" means the world of images and the separated imagination (*al-khiyāl al-munfaṣila*), the imaginal world existing independently of individuals). This

world is the forms abstracted from matter, which in the language of the revelation is called the world of preexistence (*ʿālam al-dhar*) in the descending arc, of which the corresponding world in the ascending arc is called the world of the isthmus (*ʿālam al-barzakh*). (5) Universal Nature, which is the special forms (*ṣūra nawʿiyya*) of the elements and the celestial spheres. (6) The absolute corporeal form (i.e., pure extension), which is the collection of special and corporeal forms and their matter, and is called the "Realm of Dominion" (*ʿālam al-mulk, nāsūt*) or the "Realm of Witnessing" (*ʿālam al-shahāda*). (7) The final level, which the descent of existence and the arc of descent ends with, is prime matter. The levels of the ascending arc are equivalent to the levels of the descending arc, except that they go from less noble to more noble, in the following order: prime matter, form, the imaginal world, the world of souls, and the world of intellects. However, the universal intellects that bring the ascending arc to an end are different from the universal intellects of the descending arc (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:665–66, 666 n. 4; Āmulī, *Taʿlīqa*, 2:87–88).

Sabzawārī deals with the theories of the Peripatetics and the Illuminationists individually when considering some of the fundamental issues of the philosophy of divine acts: that God has real unity and is simple in all respects, the fact that only one entity proceeds from God, that the First Proceeding Entity is the Intellect, and the way that multiplicity comes about in the world. However, his preference for the Illuminationist theory can be clearly observed, particularly in that he presents and justifies the theories of the suspended images and the "lords of the species" (i.e., the Platonic archetypes) in a way that accords with his own philosophical principles. As far as the levels of existents are concerned, in addition to the vertical intellects, named the "higher dominating lights," Suhrawardī also affirms the existence of horizontal intellects, which in Illuminationist terminology are called the "lower dominating lights." These horizontal lights, which proceed through the mediacy of the vertical intellects, are of two types. One is the "nobler" class of horizontal intellects, which proceed from the aspect of illumination and dominance of the higher vertical intellects towards the lower. The other is the "noble" class of horizontal intellects, lower than the first, which proceed from the aspect of love and the witnessing of the lower vertical intellects with respect to the higher. Between the horizontal intellects, which are also called the "lords of the species," there is no cause-effect relation; however, in the levels of existence they are intermediaries of the divine emanation, such that the "nobler" class of horizontal intellects is the source and cause of the suspended images. The lower class, on the other hand, is the source and cause of the sensory world, that is, the world of elemental bodies and the celestial spheres. In this way, in contrast to the Peripatetic theory that considers the celestial spheres to proceed through the mediacy of the vertical intellects, the Illuminationist theory gives this role to the horizontal intellects. Suhrawardī has provided several demonstrations in order to rationally justify the existence of these intellects and the role that they play in the sequence and configuration of the cosmos, one of which Sabzawārī quotes. However, in both the poem and the *Commentary*, he does not critique or evaluate these proofs, and simply mentions that Mullā Ṣadrā has rejected them in the *Asfār*. Nevertheless, in the *Gloss*, while making reference to a *ḥadīth*, Sabzawārī does mention that the proofs and examples that Suhrawardī provides to justify the horizontal intellects are also indicated in the revelation religious teachings, and for example that the "lords of the species" are referred to as the "entrusted angels" (*al-malāʾika al-muwakkalīn*). This explanation seems to indicate that Sabzawārī agreed with Suhrawardī's position, as he attempts to provide a means whereby it can be justified and harmonized with religious teachings (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:700–701 n. 4). Likewise, when considering Suhrawardī's proof that the celestial spheres do not proceed from the vertical intellects in the *Gloss*, Sabzawārī states that although this proof is at first sight rhetorical, when one considers it deeply, it is in fact demonstrative (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 3:692–93 n. 2).

Although Sabzawārī's *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, along with its *Commentary* and *Gloss*, contain many more discussions than we are able to mention here, it is appropriate to mention the following point in closing about the general character of his philosophical thought in relation to the transcendent philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā, which Sabzawārī is considered a follower of. While holding a high regard for Mullā Ṣadrā, on certain points Sabzawārī does criticize and problematize some of Mullā Ṣadrā's positions. These issues include Mullā Ṣadrā's solution to the problem of mental existence; the demonstration by correlation (*burhān al-taḍāʾuf*) of the unity of the intellector and the intelligible in knowledge of things other than oneself; the nature of the compound of form and matter; one of the demonstrations for the identity of God's attributes of perfection with His Essence; and the status of the estimative faculty (*quwwa wāhima*) that Mullā Ṣadrā does not consider to be one of the independent faculties of the soul (Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*, 2:138–47, 149–52, 371–72; 3:549–50, 565–67; 5:63–64; Shīrāzī, *Asfār*, 6:133 n. 1; 7:216–17 n. 1).

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CHAPTER 26

ALI SEDAD BEY'S (D. 1900), *KAVÂIDU'T-TAḤAVVÜLÂT FÎ ḤAREKÂTI'Z-ZERRÂT* (*PRINCIPLES OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE MOTION OF PARTICLES*)

NAZIF MUHTAROĞLU

26.1. Introduction

Ali Sedad's *Kavâidu't-Taḥavvülât fî Ḥarekâti'z-Zerrât* (*Principles of Transformation in the Motion of Particles*) is a unique work introducing the basic principles of the natural sciences in nineteenth-century European circles to the Ottoman world and interpreting them from an Ashʿarite perspective. European ideas and scientific theories to a great extent were already available to Ottoman intellectuals. Yet this work introduced thermodynamics and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution for the first time to Turkish readers, and discussed the laws behind natural phenomena in a philosophical way. Thus, it is not only a scientific book that repeats the nineteenth-century European scientific theories but also an original philosophical work on the evaluation of those scientific ideas. It shows how an Ashʿarite scholar from the late Ottoman era views modern science in a critical way. Ali Sedad gives two main reasons why he wrote such a book. First, he considers sciences to be keys to material and spiritual happiness. By introducing the Western sciences to the Ottoman world, he thus aims to make a modest contribution to the progress of the sciences and the establishment of general well-being in the Ottoman realm. Second, he adds that he undertakes a philosophical evaluation of the modern sciences (*fünûn-ı cedîde*) because some enemies of Islam tried to use them as tools against

Islam itself. Ali Sedad attempts to show that, on the contrary, the new scientific ideas in fact confirm Islam (Ali Sedad 1882–83, 8–9). Before I introduce and evaluate this work, I present first the life and works of Ali Sedad. Next, I give a panorama of the social, cultural, and intellectual atmosphere of the nineteenth-century Ottoman world in order to be able to situate Ali Sedad Bey's work properly in that context. After this background information, I present and evaluate *Kavâid* in a detailed way.

26.2. Ali Sedad Bey, His Life and Work

Ali Sedad was born in 1273/1857 and died in 1317/1900. He was the only son of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (d. 1312/1895), and the brother of two sisters, Fatma Aliye (d. 1353/1936) and Emine Semiye (d. 1363/1944). Ahmed Cevdet Pasha was a great statesman and intellectual of the nineteenth-century Ottoman world. He headed the commission for the preparation of Mecelle, the first attempt to codify a part of the Islamic law in the Ottoman Empire. Pasha wrote many books on various topics from history to logic. Fatma Aliye Hanım is usually considered to be the first women philosopher and novelist in Turkey.

Under his father's guidance and care, Ali Sedad Bey received a very solid education through private tutors such as Said Bey and Mustafa Bey. He was taught physics and chemistry, and young Ali Sedad did experiments in a separate room of his house redesigned as a chemistry lab. In a nutshell, Ali Sedad showed a great interest in natural sciences (Gövsa 1933, 1431). Mathematics also attracted his attention, and he translated the French mathematician Hippolyte Sonnet's (d. 1879) book on differential and integral calculations, *Premiers éléments du calcul infinitésimal à l'usage des jeunes gens qui se destinent à la carrière d'ingénieur*, into Turkish under the title of *Hesab-ı Tefâzulî ve Temâmî* (*Integral and Differential Calculus*). Just as we infer from this translation his proficiency in reading French, we also see his ability to read Arabic from the extensive references to the classical figures and works of Islamic civilization. For example, his *Kavâid* includes a considerable number of references to al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936) and significant Ashʿarite texts such as the *Mawāqif* by ʿAdud al-Dīn al-ʿĪjī (d. 756/1355). He published *Kavâid*, his magnum opus on natural sciences, in 1300/1883 before the age of thirty. This book was approved for publication by the Ministry of Education on 17 Rebîu'l-Evvel 1300, which corresponds to 26 January 1883 in the Gregorian Calendar. The actual date of publication (on the last page of the book) is 28 Şevvâl 1300, which is 16 August 1883.

Ahmed Cevdet Pasha wanted to direct his son's attention to logic since he believed that logic is the primary discipline of study that provides the intellectual tools for distinguishing truth from falsehood and identifying errors in scientific reasoning. For that reason, he dedicated the logic books he wrote as school textbooks to Ali Sedad by naming them *Miyâr-ı Sedad* (*The Measure of Sedad*) and *Adâb-ı Sedad* (*The Dialectics of Sedad*). Ali Sedad took his father's advice, but in addition to classical logic he studied modern logic. In 1303/1885–86, he published his most important work on logic, entitled *Mîzânu'l-ʿUkûl fi'l-Mantık ve'l-Usûl* (*Rational Criteria in Logic and Method*), in which he introduced the mathematical logic of George Boole and Stanley Jevons in addition to the Aristotelian-Avicennan logic and presented his critical reflections on them. Following Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), Ali Sedad Bey thinks that Aristotelian-Avicennan logic relies on some metaphysical assumptions that were rejected by the *mutakallimūn*. This is why, according to him, the *mutakallimūn* before al-Ghazālī harshly criticized logic. These assumptions relate not to the inferential patterns between propositions but to the Aristotelians' philosophical position on how to conceive the universe. Even before al-Ghazālī the *mutakallimūn* were thinking in accordance with logical rules, but they did not make explicit use of logical terminology (Ali Sedad 1886, 6). After al-Ghazālī, the *mutakallimūn* appropriated Aristotelian-Avicennan logic within their own conceptual systems by eliminating Aristotle's *Categories* from the sphere of logic. Concerning modern mathematical logic, Ali Sedad notes that the principles of mathematics emerge out of applying thought to quantities. Yet, he adds, the laws of thinking are more general, and their sphere of application cannot be limited to quantities. Thus the project of mathematical logic narrows the more general application of logic while providing some benefit in following the arguments symbolically. Because of this deficiency, Ali Sedad Bey does not completely approve of mathematical logic (Ali Sedad 1886, 240–41). *Mîzânu'l-ʿUkûl*, like *Kavâid* is unique not only in terms of introducing certain ideas in Europe for the first time to Ottoman intellectual life but also in terms of critically evaluating those ideas.

Some other works of Ali Sedad are as follows: *İkmâl-i Temyîz* (a work on epistemology), *Redd-i Tahlîl* (a book written together with Maḥmud Esad and Muḥammed Faik on Ottoman literature), and *Lisanü'l-Mîzân* (a short summary of *Mîzânu'l-ʿUkûl*). Ali Sedad Bey taught logic in various schools such as Galata Sarayı Sultânisi, Mahrec-i Aklâm, and Hukuk Mektebi (Law School). He died at the age of forty-three, five years after his father's death, and was buried in Fatih near the latter's tomb (Öner 1988–2013, 2:442).

26.3. THE INTELLECTUAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN WORLD

Even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Ottomans were to a certain extent aware of the sciences in Europe, and were appropriating some technologies concerning firearms, cartography, and mining. The geographical location of the Ottoman land next to the Western and Central European countries, and the migration of Jewish scholars from Spain in the fifteenth century, were factors in this intellectual interaction. The Ottomans also translated some scientific works from European languages. The French astronomer Noël Duret's (d. 1650) *Ephemerides Celestium Richelianae ex Lansbergii Tabulis* was translated by Tezkereci Köse İbrahim Efendi in 1650 under the title

Sejenjeli'l-Eflâk fî Gayeti'l-İdrâk. This book introduces Copernicus's heliocentric system for the first time to the Ottoman world. On first seeing the book, the chief astronomer of the sultan initially labeled it a "European vanity." Later, when he checked it against Ulug Bey's astronomic tables, he abandoned his initial reaction and commended the book by rewarding İbrahim Efendi. The historian of science Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu regards the chief astronomer's initial reaction as an instance of the reluctance typical among the Ottomans to accept Europe's scientific superiority at that time. İhsanoğlu notes that in the seventeenth century, the Ottomans were still considering themselves self-sufficient in economy and education as well as superior to Europeans in moral and cultural matters. However, this picture changed toward the end of the seventeenth century. The defeat of the Ottoman army at Vienna in 1683 marked the turning point. From that time on, the Ottomans began to lose wars and lands. Consequently, they gradually came to accept Western superiority in certain areas, especially in science and technology. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, we see certain attempts to import Western science and technology into the Ottoman world. İhsanoğlu states that there were three main channels for this transmission: (1) sending people to Europe to observe its culture and study there, (2) establishing new educational institutions where European science and technology were taught, (3) translating important books on science and technology into Turkish (İhsanoğlu 1996a, 18–20).

The Ottoman state started sending people to Europe for education in 1827, sending four students to France. Before the Tanzimat proclamation in 1839, thirty-six students were sent to several centers of Europe, including London, Paris, and Vienna. All of these students were required to study disciplines relevant to military needs. After 1839, students sent to Europe were allowed to study nonmilitary disciplines. The Ottoman state gradually increased the number of students to be given a foreign education by adding non-Muslims into this group (İhsanoğlu 1996b, 128). Let me now explain these three channels in a more detailed way.

In order to modernize the army and train soldiers knowledgeable in European sciences, the Ottoman state began to establish new educational institutions in the eighteenth century. Their curriculum was modeled on European institutions and focused on military arts and relevant sciences such as geometry, arithmetic, and drawing that is relevant to cartography. In time, the number of such institutions was increased, and the disciplines of physics, chemistry and medicine were added to the curriculum.

After the Tanzimat proclamation in 1839 the Ottoman state became much more engaged in offering services to the public. At the initiative of Sultan ʿAbdül Mecīd, in 1845, providing for public education became a state policy, for the first time in Ottoman history. The education system was reorganized by the government without much attention to the view of the religious authorities, and relied heavily on European models. *İptidâi* (elementary), *rushdiye* (secondary), and *mahalle mektebleri* (parochial schools) offered education services at different levels. These schools prepared students for Dârulfünûn-i Osmâni, the first Ottoman higher-education institution inspired by European universities, which was opened in 1870. Dârulfünûn-i Osmâni had three departments: philosophy and literature, natural sciences–mathematics, and law. It required four years of study with a thesis preparation in the last year. Dârulfünûn underwent radical modifications in the following decades, and its science-mathematics division was not able to function continuously until its reconstitution in 1900 under the name of Dârulfünûn-i Shahâne (İhsanoğlu 1996b, 128–30).

As we have seen, the Tanzimat proclamation marks an important change in the imperial approach to education. Both the students who were sent to Europe and the educational institutions established before the Tanzimat were essentially expected to meet military needs. After the Tanzimat, it seems that the state widened its perspective to cover the needs of the public and offered civil education. However, as noted by Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the orientation in education policies was still pragmatic in nature and aimed to import and use Western science and technology as quickly as possible. İhsanoğlu complains that the emphasis on scientific research and original publication was almost nonexistent except for a few Ottomans who wrote dissertations in Europe (İhsanoğlu 1996b, 132).

The urgent need to adopt and promote Western science and technology gained momentum among civilians in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1861, the Cemiyet-i İlmiye-yi Osmâniye (Ottoman Scientific Society) was established as a civil society, though some of its members were officers in the state bureaucracy. This society published *Mecmua-i Fünûn* (*Journal of Sciences)*, which as a policy focused on propagating modern science, and explicitly refrained from engaging in any religiously or politically controversial issue. In fact, this deliberate abstention from discussing scientific topics in relation to religion could be seen as more than simple caution but as constituting a kind of "secularism." This type of "secularism" was already making progress through the new educational institutions that were independent of the traditional madrasa system. Along with this secularization process, in the 1880s there appeared voices claiming to have recognized an explicit conflict between Islam and the new Western science (Poyraz 2010, 29–31).

The Hamidiye Press was printing books claiming that religion was declining in Europe. The advancements in sciences were presented as the main reason for this phenomenon (Bein 2011, 16). In this period, the ideas of some German materialists became especially popular among certain groups. Ludwig Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff* (*Force and Matter*) was for a time considered an authoritative book. The ideas of Jacob Moleschott and Karl Vogt received similar attention. Their ideas have now come to be known as "vulgar materialism," a popularized mixture of materialism, scientism, and Darwinism. This vulgar materialism rejected the role of religion in society and proposed modern science as the single criterion for obtaining truth and social development. The first prominent Turkish intellectual who was influenced by these ideas was Beşir Fuad. The historian Şükrü Hanioğlu notes that this materialism spread quickly among the Young Ottomans (later also known as the Young Turks), an organization opposed to the regime instituted by the Sultan Abdulhamid II after 1878.

In addition, some missionaries working within the Ottoman world specifically charged Islam with being an anti-scientific religion that has prevented technological and political progress. This missionary propagation was quite influential within the public schools and learned circles. Abdülhekim Ḥikmet, a student from the Imperial School of Medicine, was influenced by the American missionary Cornelius van Dyck and wrote several articles propounding this missionary critique. In response, Ali Sedad and his contemporary Maḥmud Esad argued that Islam is compatible with modern science and pointed out the spectacular achievements of the Muslim past (Yalçınkaya 2015, 190-194). Thus, it seems that Ali Sedad was referring to those who are influenced by German vulgar materialism and certain missionaries when he wrote of "the enemies of Islam" who try to use modern science against Islam.

On 29 March 1883, the French Orientalist Ernest Renan delivered a speech entitled "L'Islamisme et la science" ("Islamism and Science") and argued that Islam is inherently incompatible with science (Renan 1887, 375–401). As a Muslim intellectual, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī was the first to respond to Renan by defending the compatibility of Islam and science. Renan responded and argued that the past scientific achievements of the Islamic civilization were not due to Islam but despite the obstacles of Islam, just as the scientific accomplishments of Galileo were not because of Catholicism (Renan 1887, 405). Renan's ideas received attention among the Ottomans. Namık Kemal wrote a reply, though this was only published posthumously. However, it is not plausible to consider Renan to be one of Ali Sedad's targets when he referred to "enemies of Islam." Although *Kavâid* was published on 16 August 1883, later than Renan's lecture, it received permission from the Ministry of Education for publication on 26 January 1883, long before the lecture. Since "the final draft of the book" must be presented for getting such permissions, Ali Sedad could not have made substantial modifications to the book between these dates.

By the end of the nineteenth century almost every intellectual including among the Ottomans, including Ali Sedad, believed that modern Western science and technology must be imported into their world. Yet there were major disagreements among them on how to treat this new science in relation to Islam. Ali Sedad was probably the first sophisticated Ottoman thinker to draw attention to the simple-minded positivist attitude toward Islam and to argue that this attitude is baseless.

Now, let us look at the types of books on European science and technology in the nineteenth-century Ottoman world. Emre Dölen points out that until the 1870s the translations made from European languages, and mainly from French, were essentially oriented to transmit military technology and engineering. There were also books on basic science, but they were prepared for military purposes (Dölen 1996, 184). After the 1870s books on nonmilitary fields began to increase. Publications covered a variety of fields ranging from astronomy and geology to chemistry and botany. Most books were on chemistry (Dölen 1996, 174–84). Yet, Dölen notes, they kept having a pragmatic orientation. For example, publications in organic chemistry and analytical chemistry were abundant in comparison to books in general chemistry because the former were needed more for the preparation of medicine (Dölen 1996, 185). Another example would be Adolphe Ganot's (d. 1887) physics book, *Traité élémentaire de physique expérimentale et appliquée et de météorologie*, which was quite popular all over Europe in the nineteenth century. It was translated into Turkish under the title of *İlm-i Hikmet-i Tabiiye* in 1876 and became popular in the Ottoman world (Akbaş 2011, 177–78). In the introduction, the translator, Antranik Gırcikyan, stated that this book was approved for teaching in the School of Medicine, and he prepared it by focusing on the physiological and medical applications of physics (Akbaş 2011, 183). When Gırcikyan published the second edition of his translation ten years later, Ganot had released several more editions of his own work. Gırcikyan revised his earlier translation by looking at Ganot's later editions, from the fourteenth to nineteenth. While the nineteenth edition of Ganot's book on physics introduced a chapter on the concept of energy and the law of the conservation of energy, the second edition of its Turkish translation did not contain anything about energy. As Meltem Akbaş points out, this omission shows that Gırcikyan deliberately ignored the energy section and did not want to introduce more abstract and theoretical aspects of the new physics (Akbaş 2011, 190).

It is generally true that Western sciences were introduced essentially for their practical applications. However, there were books on various basic sciences. These books were prepared in particular by certain instructors employed in the new military institutions. For example, Hodja İshak Efendi prepared a four-volume compendium of sciences under the title of *Mecmua-i Ulûm-i Riyaziye* (*Compendium of Mathematical Sciences*) between 1830 and 1834, which introduced advanced mathematics with differential and integral calculus, physics (*ilm-i tabiiye*), mechanics (*cerr-i eskâl*), electricity, and chemistry (*ilm-i hall-i terkib-i ecsâm*). His presentation of chemistry was based on Lavoisier's *Traité élémentaire de chimie* (Adıvar 1970, 197). The first book on chemistry alone was written in 1848 by Dervish Pasha. His book *Usûl-i Kimya* (*Elements of Chemistry*) covered topics from general and inorganic chemistry. Dervish Pasha closely followed Jakob Berzelius's symbolic system for elements and formulations. Yet Dervish Pasha tried to produce a Turkish terminology in chemistry (Dölen 1996, 168–69). In the introductions to their respective books, both İshak Hodja and Dervish Pasha emphasized that the sciences they introduced are necessary for military education (İhsanoğlu 1985, 84). An emphasis on the practicality of modern sciences was added even in works on basic science. This emphasis never disappeared during the nineteenth century. We can see it also in Ali Sedad's *Kavâid* when he says that the new sciences are keys for material and spiritual happiness. However, this emphasis on practicality need not be seen as a kind of vulgar pragmatism. Ali Sedad and the others who promoted basic sciences may have thought that these sciences would result in certain benefits in the long run even if we do not obtain immediate technological fruits when we study them. In this regard, Ali Sedad's presentation of the more theoretical sides of modern physics, such as the laws behind the motion of particles and the concept of energy, differentiates him from the narrow-minded pragmatists of his time who aimed only to gain the immediate benefits of the science and technology in Europe.

26.4. The Content of *Kavâid*

The central theme of *Kavâid* is to show that all natural phenomena can be conceived as different forms of energy and arise out of various types of atomic motions. On the basis of this idea, Ali Sedad Bey argues that the Ashʿarite atomistic metaphysics is confirmed by nineteenth-century physics. This, according to him, showed the superiority of the *mutakallimūn* to the *falāsifa* and decisively refuted the idea that science and Islam are in conflict.

As a key element in this project, Ali Sedad Bey reserves most of the book to the presentation of thermodynamics. This drew Celal Saraç's attention and led him to evaluate this work in terms of this subject only. For Saraç, *Kavâid* is the first thermodynamics book written in Ottoman Turkish, a considerable achievement in terms of introducing this subject thirty years after of its founding in Europe (Saraç 1992, 3–9). Nonetheless, presenting *Kavâid* only as a book of thermodynamics diminishes its intellectual value and narrows its wider perspective. Ali Sedad emphasizes the scientific developments in thermodynamics not just to introduce this new field but especially because they serve his main purpose in *Kavâid*. Scientists in this field proposed that the phenomenon of heat is not something completely different from other natural phenomena. James Prescott Joule showed that heat can be converted to work and that the mathematical relation between them could be given precisely. Rudolph Clausius suggested the view that heat arises out of the motion of particles like other natural phenomena. As Peter M. Harman points out, the development of thermodynamics was an important stage in the general outlook of nineteenth-century physics and could be characterized as an increasing mathematization of natural phenomena and unification of various types of events under the concept of energy. The dominant program of explaining all the various phenomena was a mechanical view of nature according to which particles in motion were the basis of all physical events (Harman 1995, 2–9). In 1881, J. Bernard Stallo wrote about the current state of physics at his time:

> The science of physics, in addition to the general laws of dynamics and their application to the interaction of solid, liquid and gaseous bodies, embraces the theory of those agents which were formerly designated as imponderables—light, heat, electricity and magnetism, etc.; and all these are now treated as forms of motion, as different manifestations of the same fundamental energy. (Stallo 1982, 1)

One or two years later, Ali Sedad wrote the following:

> Moreover, certain points of view are found nowadays in order to look at the laws behind natural phenomena more comprehensively so that these laws illuminate the concealed truth. They help us in understanding, establishing and expanding theories that connect the results of scientific experiments to one another. Thus they enable us to acquire certain universal laws. Those who examine the universe from these points of view acquire an ability to comprehend and discuss the intricacies of the wisdom behind natural phenomena. Discoveries made by this method have not been fully established as an independent discipline. Yet in Europe, there have appeared certain books, in various size and scope, with titles like "the trend of mechanical heat" (*tarîk-i ḥarâret-i mancınikiye*), "a mechanical theory of heat" (*naẓariyât-ı mancınikiye-i ḥarâret*) and "the conservation of energy" (*te'sirin maṣûniyeti*). Within them, natural phenomena such as heat and light are compared to other phenomena. It is proven

> that they could be converted into each other, and all of them arise out of the same source. It has been shown that the causes of changes in nature are manifestations of only one fundamental force. This fundamental force acts on the molecules (*eczâ-yı ferdiye*), which form bodies. All natural phenomena consist in transformations that happen to the configurations of combined molecules. This view, known as "atomism", is credited everywhere in Europe and is used for the establishment of the foundation of the newly emerging science. (Ali Sedad 1883, 5–6)

The parallels between these two passages show how closely Ali Sedad follows the scientific developments in Europe at his time and grasps the gist of the scientific program that aims to unify natural phenomena on the basis of mechanical explanation. Ali Sedad uses this scientific perspective to support Ashʿarite metaphysics, which he considers as constituting the worldview of Sunnī Islam against the *falāsifa*'s understanding of nature. In this way, he responds to those who claim that science is in conflict with Islam and proposes a philosophical interpretation of nineteenth-century physics from an Ashʿarite point of view. Let me now summarize the content of *Kavâid*. The book consists of six chapters and was printed in 192 pages.

The first chapter, "Experiences of Thermodynamics," analyzes the relationship between heat and motion and introduces the concept of energy (Ali Sedad 1883, 10–47). Ali Sedad Bey presents first the concept of kinetic energy (*kuvve-i müessire*), the energy of motion, by the formula ($mv^2/2$) where m refers to mass and v to velocity. Then he presents the equivalence of change in kinetic energy to mechanical work (*amel*) through the formula ($F.\ x$), where F refers to the force on an object and x to the distance the object travels under this force. This mathematical equation helps measure the energy an object has. For example, an object that is located h meters above the earth and is d kg heavy has a potential energy (*kuvve*) of ($d.\ h$). When this object is dropped and hits the surface of the earth, at the moment of collision its potential energy is completely transformed into kinetic energy. If it is an elastic object, it can return to its original height and regain its potential energy. As it gains potential energy it loses its kinetic energy and cannot go above the original height. Thus different types of energies could be converted to each other. This is called "the transformation of energy" (*tahavvülat-ı teʾsir*). Yet the total energy of the object is preserved. This is called "the conservation of energy" (*masûniyet-i teʾsir*). If the object is not elastic, then we could observe a certain amount of heat released as a result of the collision. In such a case, some of the energy of the object is converted into heat, but again the total amount of energy, that is, the sum of the kinetic energy of the object and heat, is constant. Ali Sedad gives more examples of the conversion between heat and motion. He refers to Joule's discovery of the link between mechanical work and heat. This discovery has helped us see the link between kinetic energy and heat and consider the latter as a form of energy and measure it.

The second chapter, "The Mechanical Theory of Heat," extends the analysis of heat into the motion of gases (Sedad 1883, 48–73). In this chapter, Ali Sedad summarizes the main ideas and theories of the motion of gases and its relation to heat and temperature. We see many references to scientists in this field, ranging from Daniel Bernoulli and Louis Joseph Gay-Lussac to Sadi Carnot and Rudolf Clausius.

The third chapter, "The Generality of the Principle of Transformation," explains how various natural phenomena originate from a common source (Sedad 1883, 74–99). In the preceding chapters, Ali Sedad discussed the transformation of heat and motion into each other. The transformation is possible because one physical phenomenon appears in two different forms. Similarly, Ali Sedad adds, all apparently distinct natural phenomena can be traced back to a common source. Electricity, magnetism, light, and heat can be converted into each other. All of them stem from various types of motions of the particles (*zerrât*) that constitute physical objects. As these particles vibrate, their motions are propagated through the ether, and the different types of waves corresponding to different vibrations and oscillations appear as distinct phenomena such as light and heat. In brief, the waves of light and heat consist in the kinetic energy that arises out of the motion of particles. Various motions could result in further different forms of waves, but the total energy in every transformation remains constant. While a hot object gets colder, a cold object in the same environment gets hotter until the system reaches equilibrium. Ali Sedad points out that sound also consists of the motion of particles but is not propagated through ether. He also presents chemical heat as a form of energy that relates to chemical combinations at the molecular level. According to Ali Sedad, treating all these various phenomena as different manifestations of energy is a considerable extension of the scientific work done on the nature of heat in the 1840s. Conceiving heat as a kind of motion was an important step toward this idea. This chapter ends with historical information about the foundation of thermodynamics by referring to many scientists who helped shape this field, such as James Prescott Joule, William John Macquorn Rankine, William Thomson (Lord Kelvin), and Clausius.

As the third chapter focuses on the transformation of energy, the fourth chapter, "Conservation of Energy," elaborates on how energy is preserved in various transformations (Sedad 1883, 100–119). In every transformation, the energy expended is the same as the energy that arises afterward. Thus, energy neither ceases to exist nor begins to exist ex nihilo. It is only transformed from one form into another. Ali Sedad interprets many natural events in accordance with this principle. For example, the light that comes from the sun provides the fundamental energy for the world. Plants use this energy for certain chemical reactions, and in turn they provide the oxygen that animals need for respiration. Animals use oxygen and food in their environment to provide the necessary energy for their motion and life. In turn, animals release carbon dioxide that is then used by plants. In this way, the atmosphere is kept in balance.

From the principle of the conservation of energy, Ali Sedad draws a significant conclusion about the nature of the human will (*irade-i cüz'iye*). He thinks that human action cannot arise just out of the human body because the energy for that motion must come from outside. Human beings like other animals acquire that energy after the combustion of the food and oxygen they get from the environment. Thus, the energy in them is converted into kinetic energy after certain chemical reactions. Ali Sedad compares this mechanism to steam engines in ships. A steam engine by itself cannot initiate motion and move the ship. This can happen only by receiving energy from outside such as by burning coal. Similarly, Ali Sedad argues, humans must receive energy from outside.

Hence, humans cannot create energy from within but can only use it in various ways. On that basis, Ali Sedad criticizes both the Muʿtazila's and the Jabriyya's accounts of human will. Since humans rely on energy from outside, humans cannot create their actions. In upholding the view that humans create their action, many Muʿtazilite scholars violate the principle of the conservation of energy. In their total denial of human will, the Jabriyya scholars cannot account for the self-evident experience of freedom in us. According to Ali Sedad, the Sunnī school (*fırka-i nâciye*) between these two extremes is the right path since it confirms the freedom of human will without ascribing the creation of action to humans. In this way, the principle of the conservation of energy serves (Sunnī) Islam.[1]

The fifth chapter, "The Atomist School," presents the main views of atomism and indicates the parallels between Ashʿarite atomism and atomistic theories in nineteenth-century Europe (Ali Sedad 1883, 120–53). Ali Sedad states that the departure of Wāṣil b. ʿAtāʾ from the circle of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī occasioned the rediscovery of many sciences. In this way, through the Muʿtazila school the idea of atomism entered into the Islamic intellectual community and was adopted by the Ashʿarites as well. The *mutakallimūn* rejected Aristotelian hylomorphism as accepted by the *falāsifa*. The level of scientific research at that time was not sufficient to clearly support the atomism of the *mutakallimūn* and to refute the hylomorphism of the *falāsifa*. Nonetheless, as the science of chemistry has been developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, atomism has come to the fore and become an established view in nineteenth-century science. Ali Sedad presents Antoine Lavoisier's discoveries of various elements, John Dalton's theory of atoms, and Amedeo Avogadro's and André Marie Ampère's views as important milestones in this process. In addition, he quotes long passages from Charles Adolphe Wurtz's *Atomic Theory* on the atomic theories of Daniel Bernoulli and William Thomson.

Ali Sedad considers the following theses of the *falāsifa* and proposes his interpretation of them in accordance with atomism. (1) There is no body (*cism*) without extension

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[1] In judging the strength of this argument by Ali Sedad, we should keep in mind that Ali Sedad's target here is most probably the prevalent Muʿtazilite position that humans create their actions ex nihilo. According to standard Sunnī heresiographical sources, early Muʿtazilites ascribed causality to humans to account for the human activity without explicitly considering this causal activity to be creation, but later Muʿtazilite scholars starting with Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī began to consider this causal activity as creation. Jubbāʾī is quoted in one such source as saying that a human being is the author of his act by "creating and producing new being" (*khalqan wa-ibdaʿan*) (Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 120). This view became widespread among the Muʿtazilites. Al-Ashʿarī held that creating (*khalaqa*), doing-acting (*faʿala,*) generating (*aḥdatha*), and originating (*inshāʾ*) have the same connotation, and he ascribed all of these causal activities equally to God (Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 91). On the basis of this historical background, Ali Sedad may presuppose that there is only one kind of causation, i.e., creation ex nihilo. For him, the principle of conservation of energy shows that causality—understood as creation—cannot be ascribed to human beings since energy has a base external to humans. Yet his argument does not work against those who accept secondary causality and hold that human causality is not creation ex nihilo because humans can get energy from outside and use this energy to move the limbs of their body as they wish without producing extra energy. Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, for instance, seems to fall within this group of the Muʿtazilites who ascribes causality to humans without identifying it with creation.

(*imtidâd*). (2) No extension exists without body. On the basis of these theses, Ali Sedad notes, the *falāsifa* accept matter as a continuous unity, rejecting atoms and the idea of a vacuum. In response, Ali Sedad confirms that bodies cannot exist without extension but adds that the extension of bodies arises out of the motion of their particles and the ordered relations among them. Thus, the particles of a physical object do not have to be extended. Ali Sedad follows the *mutakallimūn*'s view that bodies are composed of particles that are neither physically nor conceptually divisible (*cüz-i lâ-yetecezza'*). Since these particles are simple—not a combination of further entities—the idea of extension is not properly applied to them. In this regard, he departs from the atomists in Europe who ascribe certain sizes and shapes to atoms and believe that they are indivisible only by actual means. Furthermore, void (*halâ*) is necessary to account for the motion of particles. The gaps between particles could be considered as a void, and the particles that combine with each other in orderly ways give rise to extended objects.

The atomism prominent in the nineteenth century conceives atoms as always in motion. Although we observe certain objects to be at rest, their particles are always moving in various ways. In Ali Sedad's view, this point is closely related to the Ashʿarite idea that accidents cannot exist at two different moments. No accident can endure because the accidents we observe in objects supervene on the constant motion of the particles of those objects. The idea of constant motion implies that everything is in a different state at each moment of its existence.

Though in constant motion, atoms are not completely free but are bound by certain laws. Atoms (*cevâhir-i ferd, cüz-i lâ-tetecezza'*) combine with each other in accordance with their energies and constitute molecules (*cüz-i ferd*), which in turn constitute physical objects (*ecsâm*). Interactions between particles take place in accordance with the forces of attraction and repulsion. At the end of this chapter, Ali Sedad suggests his view on the concepts of motion, force, and energy by noting that even the greatest scholars are far from grasping the real meaning of these concepts.

The sixth and last chapter, "Philosophical Applications and Results," derives certain important implications of what has been presented so far (Ali Sedad 1883, 154–88). First, Ali Sedad states that the motion of heavenly bodies is the result of the motion of their constituent parts since the motion of physical objects is the result of their particles. Thus, there is a resemblance between our world and the whole universe. Second, since he conceives atoms as simple homogenous particles, he notes that the variety of physical objects originates out of various motions, forms, and patterns of the combination of the atoms. The classification of objects into species, families, and so on, arises out of this difference.

The third point concerns the origination of relatively big bodies out of smaller ones. As candidates for explaining this, Ali Sedad refers to the creationist and evolutionist theories and briefly evaluates Darwin's theory of evolution. According to Ali Sedad, Darwin's theory relies upon the idea that species are not fixed and they come into being from a common source through gradual modifications over a long time. He mentions two main criticisms of this theory. First, we do not observe the origination of new species. Second, if there is a common source of all species, there must be some transitional forms among current species. But we do not have such transitional species. If evolutionists claim that two different species can mate and produce offspring, this could not work, according to Ali Sedad, because these offspring cannot reproduce themselves as a self-identical species. If they reproduce, they turn back to a definite species that was present at its origination. As to the second criticism, evolutionists claim that the current state of the geological sciences is not perfect and the various layers of the earth have not been examined completely. For this reason, we do not find all the transitional forms, but they will be found as these sciences progress in time. In fact, scientists disagree on how to classify certain species between plants and animals. This shows that certain species cannot be classified into either group. Thus, at this stage of science, Darwinism cannot be rejected. In response, Ali Sedad says that Darwinism at this stage of science cannot be accepted. If we base our judgment on science, there is no sufficient evidence to support this theory. Darwinism is much more a fiction than a scientific theory. The disagreement among scientists on how to classify certain species is not because of the fact that they come from a common source but because of the ignorance of the distinguishing characteristics among the species in question. Ali Sedad concludes this part by stating that the current state of scientific knowledge that is based on observation (*tecrübe*) supports the view that species are not changeable.

The fourth point of the last chapter concerns life. After pointing out that life is a mystery and stating various views on the origination of life, Ali Sedad argues that the view of the *mutakallimūn* greatly resembles the materialist explanation of life. Materialists (*maddiyyûn*) explain the origination of life as a result of the movements and powers that supervene on the forms of the combination of particles that constitute living beings. Though *mutakallimūn* have diverse opinions, all of them proposed to explain life (*hayat*), soul (*nefs*), and spirit (*ruh*) on a material basis. The most popular explanation as presented by the influential handbook writers al-Taftazānī (d. 792/1390) and al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) suggests that the human spirit is a special form (*heykel-i mahsus*). In other words, the action of life is a motion that supervenes on the unity and coexistence of the physical parts of the body, and the conscious ego—"I"—relates to the special form (*heykel-i mahsus*) that arises out of a definite combination of particles in a body. Thus for the *mutakallimūn* mental and spiritual phenomena have a material basis as materialism proposes, though they do not reject the existence of God behind the material realm.

After a brief consideration of the end of the universe in terms of principles of thermodynamics, Ali Sedad finishes the book with a historical evaluation of the main philosophical strands (Ali Sedad 1883, 183–88). According to him, there are three mainstream ways of wisdom (*turûk-ı ḥikmet*): spiritualism (*ruhaniyyûn*), pantheism (*ishrakiyyûn*),[2] and materialism (*maddiyyûn*). Roughly speaking, according to Ali Sedad, spiritualism is the view that postulates spiritual substances. Materialism accepts material substances. Pantheism affirms only one ultimate substance and reduces everything else to the modifications of this substance. Sophism (*sofestaiyye*) is not among these ways of wisdom because it does not accept any objective truth about reality. Various schools of wisdom are diverse combinations of these strands. For instance, physicalism (*dahriyyûn*) is pure materialism; Descartes's philosophy is a combination of materialism and spiritualism. Ali Sedad notes that materialism is more popular than the other philosophical strands among the European scientific community at his time, though some philosophers also accept pantheism.[3] Most of the *mutakallimūn* accepted materialism in the following way. They explained every natural phenomenon in terms of various motions of material particles and identified their causal agent with God as an eternal being completely different from the universe. Thus, they departed from the pantheists, who accepted the unity of existence (*vahdet-i vücûd*) and rejected individual substances as loci of motion apart from a single ultimate substantial reality. Moreover, the *mutakallimūn* also differentiated themselves from the spiritualists who postulate substances in the world without a material basis. As a conclusion, the atomist metaphysics of the *mutakallimūn* closely matches the prevalent scientific worldview of the nineteenth century. Hence, the *mutakallimūn* should be recognized as precursors of modern sciences.

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[2] In the text, Ali Sedad also uses the French term *pantheisme* for *ishrakiyyûn* (Ali Sedad 1883, 83).

Despite the close connection between modern science and the metaphysics of the *mutakallimūn*, Ali Sedad also adds that the main theses of the *mutakallimūn* do not rely on their atomism. Instead of addressing every single thesis of the *falāsifa*, the *mutakallimūn* proposed atomism as an independent system to completely reject the worldview of the *falāsifa*. Yet the arguments of the *mutakallimūn* for the main theses of the Islamic worldview are independent of atomism. Neither could any change in scientific ideas affect them because the essential principles of the *mutakallimūn* are strictly logical and do not depend on experience. As a conclusion, the function of *kalām* is to rationally examine the claims of revelation and distinguish true ones from falsities. If there appears to be a conflict with revelation and self-evident truths, those revelations are either rejected or reinterpreted. Claims that do not imply logical impossibilities are accepted. Let me now pass on to evaluating the main arguments and central theses of Ali Sedad in *Kavâid*.

26.5. Evaluation

Ali Sedad Bey's *Kavâid* cannot be easily classified as either a scientific or a philosophical work. Although most of the book presents nineteenth-century scientific theories in Europe in great detail and mathematical sophistication—giving many formulas and examples of differential and integral calculus—this book also includes philosophical commentaries on certain scientific ideas and places them in a philosophical-historical context. Whether it was prepared as a textbook for science classes or as an independent work of its author is not clear. There is no evidence for its having been used in schools. The main thesis of the book is that the prevalent scientific ideas in nineteenth-century Europe are not in conflict with—but rather support—the Ashʿarite school of *kalām* whose foundational theses represent the Islamic worldview. There are two main scientific components of the argument for this claim: the theory of atomism and the idea of energy. Let me now examine and discuss Ali Sedad's philosophical view of these scientific elements of the argument.

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[3] Ali Sedad gives Schelling as an example of the pantheist philosophers in Europe and finds similarities between the ideas of Friedrich Schelling and al-Naẓẓām. For a brief analysis of this similarity, see below.

Concerning Ali Sedad's atomism, I have to note that there are dissimilarities between his view and the atomistic views in Europe. First, he holds that atoms are indivisible even conceptually, but he himself notes that the atomists in Europe defend only the actual indivisibility of atoms given the current scientific knowledge. Ali Sedad quotes from Wurtz's presentation of Daniel Bernoulli's atomism where particles in mercury and hydrogen are compared in size. Wurtz draws attention to the fact that mercury particles are a hundred times greater than hydrogen atoms in size and asks why the greater particle must be accepted as indivisible. Wurtz only notes that the known physical and chemical forces are not able to divide mercury atoms. Nonetheless, he does not reject the potential divisibility of atoms and adds the following. Even if these atoms could be divided, they would become something else and could not be called "mercury." By contrast, Ali Sedad adopts the Ashʿarite view on atoms, that is, indivisible particles (*cüz-i lâ-yetecezza'*). He presents atoms as simple entities—not combined out of something else, but much more like geometrical points. Since they are simple, he argues, there is nothing to be further divided. He also accepts that these atoms have sides and a middle between them in space. Yet he denies that they could be divisible by claiming that extension (*imtidâd*) does not apply to simple entities. This argument of Ali Sedad does not seem to be compelling because ascribing sides and a middle to an object is the same as treating this object as extended. Logically speaking, an object that has sides is extended and could be divided potentially ad infinitum, which does not lead to any contradiction. In the Ashʿarite metaphysics, possible cases that do not involve contradiction fall under the scope of divine power, and God could create such cases.

In presenting atoms, Ali Sedad also mentions ether, which he describes as a medium that transmits heat and light, and also fills the gaps between particles of physical objects. He presents two views on the nature of ether: (1) that ether is a continuous elastic substance, (2) that ether also consists of smaller particles (Ali Sedad 1883, 130). Yet he does not discuss these views, although he appears to be committed to rejecting the first view since he rejects the *falāsifa*'s conception of continuous matter and accepts the existence of indivisible particles in void.

The most important aspect of the atomist theories in Europe, which Ali Sedad uses to support the Ashʿarite metaphysics, is that atoms are in constant motion. Ashʿarites held that accidents have only momentary existence and thus cannot endure. At every moment, new accidents must inhere in atoms. Ali Sedad considers all natural phenomena to originate from various combinations and movements of atoms. In nineteenth-century Europe, most scientists attempted to unify science by presenting a common foundation of various types of natural phenomena. A mechanical explanation of them in terms of motion in matter became a dominant program. In this regard, diverse motions of particles of physical objects are supposed to give rise to various phenomena such as sound, light, heat, electricity, and magnetism. The atoms are always in motion, and hence they are constantly in a different state, that is, have a different accident. As a result, since it relies on atomic motions, every natural phenomenon is constantly renewed even if we do not notice.

Considering atoms to be in constant motion became popular in Europe with the development of thermodynamics. Scientists in this field treated heat as a phenomenon that appeared as a result of the motion of particles. The absolute zero point of temperature, 0 degrees Kelvin, or −273.15 degrees Celsius, had not been observed or reached at that time. Everything in the universe has a degree of temperature; thus everything is in motion. Ali Sedad states this by saying that absolute rest is impossible. Today we have observations and experiments that approached 0 degrees Kelvin but did not exactly reach it. Apart from thermodynamics, on the basis of the uncertainty principle in quantum mechanics, it is argued that the atomic motions would never stop (Feynman, Leighton, and Sands 1964, 2/6). From a contemporary point of view, the following remark of Richard Feynman summarizes the importance of the atomic theory and the fact that they are in constant motion:

> If, in some cataclysm, all of scientific knowledge were to be destroyed, and only one sentence passed on to the next generations of creatures, what statement would contain the most information in the fewest words? I believe it is the atomic hypothesis (or the atomic *fact*, or whatever you wish to call it) that all things are made of atoms—little particles that move around in perpetual motion, attracting each other when they are a little distance apart, but repelling upon being squeezed into one another. (Feynman, Leighton, and Sands 1964, 1/2)

When analyzing motion, Ali Sedad points out some pantheistic tendencies in Europe. He briefly introduces Schelling's natural philosophy as affirming the reality of motion but denying the plurality of substances. From this perspective, everything in the universe is understood in terms of motions and interactions of forces (Ali Sedad 1883, 132). Ali Sedad considers this view to be closer to the view of Al-Naẓẓām in the Muʿtazilite tradition. Al-Naẓẓām views physical objects and their particles as constituted from the accidents of motion. Ali Sedad thinks that this position implies pantheism for the following reason. The reality of motion depends on something—some substance—that moves. If motion does not inhere in various substrates such as atoms, then motion must be ascribed to an ultimate substance. In this approach, God plays the role reserved to this ultimate substance and falls down to the ontological status of the changeable universe. Ali Sedad firmly rejects this approach since he firmly holds that God is the eternal, transcendent Being far from the contingent, changeable universe. He emphasizes that motion must inhere in particular atoms to ensure that God is not perceived as a changeable being (Ali Sedad 1883, 185). Nonetheless, we should note that postulating a continuous kind of matter instead of atoms and void may also avoid this pantheistic implication.

Motion in matter is intimately connected to the idea of energy. As Ali Sedad notes, the relationship between motion and work can be stated in a precise mathematical formula. The physical concept that links them is kinetic energy, that is, the energy of motion. As Harman points out, all physical concepts of nineteenth-century physics are unified under the heading of the concept of energy (Harman 1995, 1–2). Every object in every state is treated as having a certain amount of energy. If an object at rest is affected by a certain amount of force, it can travel a definite distance.

The physical explanation of motion involves the concepts of force and energy. Furthermore, both of them seem to have a causal role in initiating and sustaining motion. If so, what is the role of divine power in the universe? Recall that the total energy is conserved and different types of energies can convert into each other. This expression seems to reify energy and treat it as something substantial. In fact, William Thomson and Peter Guthrie Tait offered a realist interpretation of energy by saying that "energy is as real, as indestructible, as matter" (Thomson and Tait 1876, iv). Thomson further held that only God could create or destroy energy (Harman 1995, 68). This approach treats energy as something really existent like matter and something to be created by God.

However, Ali Sedad offers a nominalist interpretation of energy in accordance with Ashʿarite occasionalism according to which God is the only real causal agent who constantly sustains the universe (Ali Sedad 1883, 101). Ali Sedad offers the following philosophical interpretation of force (*kuvva*) and energy (*te'sir*). Kinetic energy is a term to express the quantity of motion, so that it helps calculate the links between different states of motion (Ali Sedad 1883, 153). Thus, expressions that give an impression of reification of energy are just metaphorical usages. That is to say, energy is an empty term and is used as a heuristic device to interrelate various phenomena on a mathematical basis. As something unreal, energy does not participate in divine activity. Ali Sedad's nominalist view of energy greatly resembles the view of Richard Feynman, who wrote:

> There is a fact, or if you wish, a *law*, governing all natural phenomena that are known to date. There is no known exception to this law—it is exact so far as we know. The law is called the *conservation of energy*. It states that there is a certain quantity, which we call energy that does not change in manifold changes which nature undergoes. That is a most abstract idea, because it is a mathematical principle; it says that there is a numerical quantity, which does not change when something happens. It is not a description of a mechanism, or anything concrete; it is just a strange fact that we can calculate some number and when we finish watching nature go through her tricks and calculate the number again, it is the same. (Feynman, Leighton, and Sands 1964, 4/1)

For Ali Sedad, force could be regarded similarly as a term to express a law (*kanun*) about the patterns of the movements of particles according to which motion takes place (Ali Sedad 1883, 152–53). Likewise, what is called "nature" (*tabiat*) must be understood as the total phenomena that take place in an orderly way in accordance with the laws God imposed on them (Ali Sedad 1883, 101). As we have seen, Ali Sedad interprets the concepts of energy, force, and nature consistently with an occasionalist metaphysics that considers God to be the single causal agent.

In *Kavâid*, Ali Sedad upholds the occasionalist thesis that God is the only causal agent who sustains the universe at each moment in existence. Thus neither finite beings nor natural phenomena have causal efficacy on something else. He presents this thesis as the view of the orthodox community (*ahl al-sunna*) that legitimately represents the Islamic worldview. In addition, he explicates this idea by referring to the atomistic metaphysics of the Ashʿarites. However, we must refrain from supposing that this occasionalist thesis must depend on atomism. Ali Sedad clearly rejects such an interpretation and states that the theses of the *mutakallimūn* rely on strong premises that are not affected by scientific observations and experiments. That is to say, even if atomism is rejected and another scientific model of the universe is proposed, the occasionalist thesis is not affected. Ali Sedad's approach here basically follows that of the Ashʿarite school and of al-Ashʿarī himself.

Although al-Ashʿarī adopted a metaphysics that depends upon atoms and accidents as its basic elements, he does not approve of using atomism to argue for the existence of God. In his *Letter to the People of the Frontier* (*Risāla ilā al-Ṭagr bi-Bāb al-Abwāb*), he draws attention to the fact that a proof that relies on the postulation of atoms and accidents requires knowing the propositions that accidents exist, that they cannot exist by themselves, that they are different from atoms, that they must inhere in atoms, that they have different types, and that they cannot be infinite (al-Ashʿarī, *Risāla*, 89). To know all of these propositions makes the proof quite complicated and susceptible to many objections that may come from those who do not agree with them. As a result, ordinary people cannot understand such a proof and hence cannot respond to the objections directed against the principles of atomism. Thus, al-Ashʿarī claims that God forbade the Prophet Muḥammad to use such an argument for everybody since it unnecessarily complicates the issue. Instead, the Prophet Muḥammad used a simpler argument for the existence of God. This argument is basically structured to indicate the existence of an eternal causal agent (*muḥdith*) of contingent beings (*ḥādith*) in the universe. On the basis of the order and purpose observed in finite beings, this argument ascribes infinite wisdom (*ḥikma*), and mercy (*raḥma*) to this creator and identifies him with God (al-Ashʿarī, *Risāla*, 81–84, 89–90).

In *Kavâid*, Ali Sedad does not present an argument for the existence of God or His attributes by using the prominent scientific ideas of his age. Yet he explicitly says that the *mutakallimūn* could produce such arguments without appealing to experience or to any specific model of cosmology. What Ali Sedad intends to show in this work is that the prevalent scientific model of the universe at his time is compatible with occasionalism—and even supports central elements of the Ashʿarite metaphysics such as atomism and the perishable nature of accidents—but not that occasionalism rationally depends on the current state of science.

26.6. CONCLUSION

Ali Sedad's *Kavâid* is a book difficult to find, difficult to read, and difficult to understand. Its language, nineteenth-century Ottoman Turkish, a mixture of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and French, also complicates access to the text. What is more, the content of the book cannot be properly appreciated if Islamic *kalām*, philosophy, and nineteenth-century natural sciences are not studied sufficiently. All these obstacles might explain why this work has not received proper attention so far. Interestingly, we do not find any explicit reference to this work even in the Ottoman intellectual tradition that came after Ali Sedad, though his general perspective seems to have been shared by many later scholars such as Fatma Aliye Hanım, Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır.

Nonetheless, a careful study of *Kavâid* reveals its rich content and compels one to regard it as a lost treasure. It seems to be the first scholarly work that examines modern science in relation to Islamic occasionalism. The nominalist interpretation this work offers for the basic concepts of modern science such as force and energy is still appealing and is shared by prominent scientists. In conclusion, this book presents an occasionalist approach to science. It does not treat science as evidence for occasionalism, nor does it ignore the findings of modern science in relation to occasionalism. Both are in agreement. In short, Ali Sedad intends to tell us the following: If someone wonders about the metaphysical dimensions of science, occasionalism is worth examining. If someone wonders about the implications of occasionalism in the universe, modern science is worth examining. The Islamic worldview presents this balanced relationship between science and occasionalism.

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CHAPTER 27

MUḤAMMAD IQBĀL (D. 1938)

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam

MUSTANSIR MIR

27.1. Life and Works

Muḥammad Iqbāl is a major intellectual and literary figure of Muslim India. His principal reputation is as a poet, but he was also a philosopher—hence the title poet-philosopher—and he made a significant contribution to Indian Muslim politics as well.

Born in 1294/1877 to a devoutly religious middle-class family, Iqbāl received his early education in his native town, Sialkot, in present-day Pakistan, where he was fortunate to have as his teacher the distinguished scholar Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan (d. 1347/1929), who took personal interest in nurturing Iqbāl's talent and cultivated in him a fine literary taste. After graduating from high school in 1892, Iqbāl studied at college, first in Sialkot, then in Lahore, a major academic and cultural center of India. In 1899 he obtained an MA in philosophy from the well-known Government College of Lahore, where the eminent orientalist Sir Thomas Arnold (d. 1930) was, like Mīr Ḥasan in Sialkot, Iqbāl's affectionate mentor. Arnold instructed Iqbāl in the Western intellectual tradition and taught him the modern methods of research. The teacher and the student became lifelong friends. Iqbāl taught history, philosophy, and economics at a college in Lahore. He was already known in the city's literary circles as a promising young poet, and his recitation of his poetry at the annual sessions of a Muslim welfare organization, Anjumān-i Ḥimāyat-i Islām (Society for the Support of Islam), soon earned him national fame. In 1905 Iqbāl left for Europe for higher studies, and in three years graduated from Cambridge University, qualified at the bar from London's Lincoln's Inn, and earned a PhD in philosophy from Munich University. Iqbāl's stay in Europe gave him the opportunity to make a close study of European culture and philosophy and helped form some of the key ideas of his later thought. Upon his return to India, he started his legal practice (he was a reluctant lawyer, only working to earn enough money to meet his basic needs) and taught at college (the lack of academic freedom as a government-appointed teacher left him unhappy). But he continued to be active and productive on the literary front. Later he took part for a while in practical politics. Certain political developments in India, then under British colonial rule, and in other parts of the world led him to turn his attention to the plight of Muslims in and outside the country, and his writings of the time reflect his concerns. In 1930 Iqbāl proposed, in view of the fundamental religious and cultural differences between the country's Hindu and Muslim communities, the creation of a separate homeland for at least the Muslims of northwestern India. In 1931 and 1932 he was part of the Muslim delegation to the Round Table Conferences held in London to discuss constitutional matters pertaining to India. In 1932 he went from England to France to meet Henri Bergson, who keenly listened to Iqbāl's explanation of the Islamic view of time, and then to Italy to meet Mussolini, who had expressed a wish to see him. For his literary accomplishments, Iqbāl was knighted by the British Crown. Iqbāl's last years were marred by ill health, which prevented him from carrying out several academic projects he had conceived of; bad health also kept him from accepting the invitation to give Rhodes lectures at Oxford in 1935. Iqbāl's death in 1357/1938 was mourned across a large part of the Muslim world.

Iqbāl's first volume of poetry was *Asrār-i Khudī* (*The Secrets of the Self*; 1915, 2nd ed. 1918; in *Kull.-F*), which stresses the need for an individual to bring out his or her potential through action and struggle. The work's English translation by Iqbāl's Cambridge teacher, Reynold Nicholson, introduced Iqbāl to the wider world as a serious poet-thinker. A companion volume, *Rumūz-i Bīkhudī* (*The Mysteries of Selflessness*; 1918; in *Kull.-F*), shows how individual talent can be harnessed to the service of society. The two volumes, often referred to as a single work, *Asrār-u-Rumūz* (*Secrets and Mysteries*), established Iqbāl's image as a poet with a distinctive, novel, and urgent message, and his later poetical output reinforced that image. *Payām-i Mashriq* (*The Message of the East*; in *Kull.-F*), written in response to Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan*, deals with philosophical, literary, and political themes. *Bāng-i Darā* (*The Sound of the Caravan Bell*; in *Kull.-U*) includes, besides poems on nature, patriotism, eminent personalities, and major events of Islamic history, his famous "Complaint" to God (to God about the Muslims' abject position in the world) and God's "Reply to the Complaint." In *Zabūr-i ʿAjam* (*Persian Psalms*; 1927; in *Kull.-F*) we find Iqbāl conversing with God and commenting on the world of human beings. *Jāwīd-Nāma* (*The Poem of Eternity*; 1932; in *Kull.-F*), often compared to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, relates Iqbāl's journey, under the guidance of his spiritual master Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (604/1207–672/1273), in the course of which Iqbāl discusses a series of philosophical ideas from various cultures. *Armaghān-i Ḥijāz* (*The Gift of the Ḥijāz*; 1938; Persian section in *Kull.-F*, Urdu section in *Kull.-U*) consists mainly of quatrains in which Iqbāl expresses his views on a variety of subjects (the Urdu part includes the celebrated "Iblīs's Advisory Council," in which Iblīs, or Satan, after writing off capitalism, fascism, and communism, expresses his apprehensions about the rise of a just and egalitarian Islam that would challenge his dominion). *Bāl-i Jibrīl* (*Gabriel's Wing*; 1936; in *Kull.-U*) redefines the ghazal—the conventional Urdu love lyric—by employing it as a medium for treating a variety of religious and philosophical themes; it includes "Cordova Mosque," often called Iqbāl's masterpiece. *Żarb-i Kalīm* (*The Stroke of Moses*;

1937; in *Kull.-U*), described on the title page by Iqbāl as "a declaration of war against the present age," is a—sometimes scathing—critique both of Western culture and politics and of Muslim societies. There are two other short volumes: *Musāfir* (*Traveler*; 1934; in *Kull.-F*), in which, during his 1933 visit to Afghanistan, Iqbāl reflects on the country's history; and *Pas Chih Bāyad Kard Ay Aqwām-i Sharq?* (*What Must Now Be Done, O Nations of the East*?; 1936; in *Kull.-F*), which, written after the 1935–36 Italian invasion of Abyssinia, addresses a number of issues confronting the Muslim world at the time.

Iqbāl also wrote a number of prose works. His *ʿIlm al-Iqtiṣād* (*Political Economy*; 1903) was probably the first book in Urdu on economics. His numerous journal and newspaper articles, published as *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal* (1977), include, besides thoughtful pieces on historical, philosophical, and political subjects, his thoroughly researched budget speeches as a member of the assembly of the Punjab province, and also his presidential address at the 1930 All-India Muslim League session, in which he proposed the creation of a homeland for India's Muslims (he is regarded as the spiritual father of Pakistan, the country created in pursuance of his vision). The monograph *Bedil in the Light of Bergson* compares the Indian Muslim poet-philosopher Mīrzā ʿAbd al-Qādir Bīdil (d. 1133/1721) with the modern French thinker. *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, written as his doctoral dissertation, was a highly original work, and several of its insights continue to be valid and relevant today. The notebook Iqbāl maintained for a few months in 1910, *Stray Reflections*, consists of brief but perceptive and often intriguing observations on a wide range of subjects, and can be viewed as a springboard for some of his later thought. Iqbāl's most significant prose work, however, is *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, which was originally published as a collection of six lectures delivered in several cities of India, and to which a seventh lecture, written for a 1932 meeting of London's Aristotelian Society, was added for the 1934 Oxford edition, the basis of later editions.[1]

27.2. The *Reconstruction*: Introductory Note

The *Reconstruction*, as Iqbāl explains in the preface, seeks to fulfill the urgent "demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge" "by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical traditions of Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge" (xlv). Iqbāl's primary concern in the work is no different than that of other reformers—whether of the Middle East, such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1315/1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1323/1905), Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1354/1935), and Amīr Shakīb Arslān (d. 1366/1946), or of the Indian subcontinent, such as Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1306/1898) and Syed Ameer Ali (d. 1347/1928)[2]—namely, to arrest the decline of Muslim society and bring about a regeneration of that society. But there is something unusual about Iqbāl's approach to the subject. Here, following, are the titles of the book's chapters:

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[1] The references to the *Reconstruction* in this chapter are to the Stanford edition of 2013. Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent citations from Iqbāl refer to the *Reconstruction*.

1. Knowledge and Religious Experience
2. The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience
3. The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer
4. The Human Ego—His Freedom and Immortality
5. The Spirit of Muslim Culture
6. The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam
7. Is Religion Possible?

Neither these titles nor the wide variety of topics—religious, theological, legal, mystical, philosophical, political, scientific, literary—dealt with under them in the pages of the *Reconstruction* would appear, upon a cursory review, to bear a direct or immediate connection with the above-stated general objective of modern Muslim reformist writings. In reading the *Reconstruction*, one gets the strong impression that, unlike other reformers, Iqbāl seems to think that reform begins at the level of thought: a fundamental transformation of minds has to precede any real and visible change on the ground, and, in the case of Islam, which has a robust and diverse intellectual and spiritual history of over a thousand years, the intended transformation of minds, if it is to pass muster as authentic, has to reckon responsibly—which means, both respectfully and critically—with that history.

It is with a view to effecting such a change in the vision, consciousness, and thought patterns of Muslims that Iqbāl undertakes to examine a series of major developments in historical Muslim thought that have a bearing on what we have called Iqbāl's primary concern. Accordingly, we find Iqbāl dealing with the ideas of such diverse Muslim thinkers, scientists, and writers from various lands and epochs as Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 180/767), Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936), Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048), Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (d. 595/1198), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Haytham (d. 430/1039), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1176/1763), and Zia Gökalp (d. 1343/1924). Nor is that all. Since Iqbāl is convinced of the need to engage with the full span not only of Muslim thought, but also of the thought of the dominant Western civilization of modern times, he sets out to examine relevant aspects of that thought as well, dealing with the ideas of such Westerns thinkers, scientists, and writers as Plato, Aristotle, René

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[2] A brief bibliography on these reformers and their writings is in order: Keddie 1968 (Afghānī); Hourani 1983 (Afghānī, ʿAbduh, Rashīd Riḍā); Badawi 1978 (Afghānī); bin Jumʿa 2008 (Shakīb Arslān); Kramer 1996 (Shakīb Arslān); Troll 1978 (Sayyid Aḥmad Khān); Baljon 1964 (Sayyid Aḥmad Khān); Dar 1957 (Sayyid Aḥmad Khān); Amīn 1979 (Syed Ameer Ali).

Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Isaac Newton, George Berkeley, Immanuel Kant, Auguste Comte, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Oswald Spengler, Sigmund Freud, Henri Louis Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead, Albert Einstein, and Bertrand Russell. It would not be wrong to say that hardly any other reformist work of modern Islam makes an equally extensive and intensive intellectual inquiry into possibilities of establishing points of contact or harmony between tradition and modernity, between Islamic and Western thought, and, in general terms, between religious faith and scientific enterprise.

27.3. Some Key Ideas of the *Reconstruction*

We will now briefly examine selected key ideas of the *Reconstruction*.

27.3.1. Nature of Religious Faith

Iqbāl believes that, while religion occupies an important and enduring place in human life, religious philosophy needs to be restated in accordance with the changed habits of thinking in every new age. Religious faith is ultimately grounded in "a special type of inner experience," but modern man, on account of his "habits of concrete thought—habits which Islam itself fostered at least in the earlier stages of its cultural life," has become "less capable of that experience which he further suspects because of its liability to illusion" (xlv). As already noted, Iqbāl wrote the *Reconstruction* in response to what he regards as the legitimate modern "demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge."

In saying that religious faith rests on a certain "inner experience," Iqbāl does not mean to dichotomize experience into two generically different domains, an inner one that relates to human consciousness and employs intuition as its instrument and an outer one that relates to sensory phenomena and employs conceptual thought as its instrument. A basic postulate of the *Reconstruction* is that of the essential validity of experience in all its multifariousness. Iqbāl rejects the notion that only the aspects of reality accessible through sense perception yield reliable knowledge:

> The total-Reality, which enters our awareness and appears on interpretation as an empirical fact, has other ways of invading our consciousness and offers further opportunities of interpretation. The revealed and mystic literature of mankind bears ample testimony to the fact that religious experience has been too enduring and dominant in the history of mankind to be rejected as mere illusion. There seems to be no reason, then, to accept the normal level of human experience as fact and reject its other levels as mystical and emotional. The facts of religious experience are facts among other facts of human experience and, in the capacity of yielding knowledge by interpretation, one fact is as good as another. (13)

Religion, then, cannot be dismissed as illusion or as feeling that lacks a rational element: "faith is more than mere feeling. . . . It has something like a cognitive element" (1). In fact, in view of its essential function of transforming and guiding "man's inner and outer life," "religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science. . . . That is why Professor Whitehead has acutely remarked that 'the ages of faith are the ages of rationalism' " (2; see also 17).

But to affirm the element of rationality in religion is not to grant automatic validity to any and every kind of religious experience. There certainly are religions that "provide a kind of cowardly escape from the facts of life," but "this is not true of all religions" (20). In principle, then, if "the facts of religious experience are facts among other facts of human experience," then those facts should, like all others, be open to philosophical inquiry (13), only that, unlike science, which takes "sectional views of Reality," "religion . . . demands the whole of Reality" (34). Since it is "not a departmental affair . . . [and] is an expression of the whole man," religion can be judged and evaluated by philosophy only on religion's own terms (2)

It would be highly instructive to compare, allowing for the differential of problematic between Iqbāl's age and earlier Islamic times, Iqbāl's view of the relationship between religion and reason with the view of that relationship held, for example, by Ibn Ḥazm (Abū Zahra 1954, 194 ff.), Ibn Taymiyya (Abū Zahra, n.d., 213 ff.), or Averroes (Urvoy 1996, 1:338). (For Ghazālī's view of that relationship, see subsection 27.3.2.). A detailed comparison of that kind cannot be made here, but Iqbāl's statement that religion, in view of its purported goal of bringing about a wholesale transformation of human life and conduct, must needs have a rational basis for its general truths adds a new angle to the discussion of the issue, for he is interpreting the quest by "later mystics and non-mystic rationalists . . . for a coherent system of ideas" in Islamic history (2) not only as an intellectual but also as a moral imperative.

When Iqbāl says that early Islam itself fostered what can typically be called modern "concrete habits of thought," he obviously does not mean that the modern and Islamic versions of those habits of thought are identical. In the modern version, concrete thinking is applied to the world of sensory objects, which are amenable to sense perception, but in the Islamic version, concrete thinking eventually evolves into spiritual thinking, treating the world of sensory objects as symbolic of a higher realm of reality.

27.3.2. The Empirical Outlook of the Qurʾān

That the Qurʾān speaks of nature as a repository of the signs of God is a well-known fact and an oft-made observation. Drawing on this Qurʾānic view of nature, Iqbāl criticizes early Muslim thinkers' failure, under the impact of Greek thought, to recognize, and appreciate the significance of, the empirical outlook of the Qurʾān. Unlike the Greeks, the Qurʾān is preoccupied with deed rather than with idea, with fact rather than with theory, with the concrete rather than with the speculative (64, 102, 104, 105). Iqbāl acknowledges that Greek thought "has been a great cultural force in the history of Islam

. . . [it] very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers," but "it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the Qurʾān" (3), for "the spirit of the Qurʾān was essentially anti-classical" (3, also 56, 102). After referring to Socrates' and Plato's focus on study of man rather than on study of nature—"the world of plants, insects, and stars"—Iqbāl remarks:

> How unlike the spirit of the Qurʾān, which sees in the humble bee a recipient of divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens, and the planets swimming through infinite space! . . . How unlike the Qurʾān, which regards "hearing" and "sight" as the most valuable divine gifts and declares them to be accountable to God for their activity in this world. This is what the earlier Muslim students of the Qurʾān completely missed under the spell of classical speculation. They read the Qurʾān in the light of Greek thought. It took them over two hundred years to perceive—though not quite clearly—that the spirit of the Qurʾān was essentially anti-classical, and the result of this perception was a kind of intellectual revolt, the full significance of which has not been realized even up to the present day. It was partly owing to this revolt and partly to his personal history that Ghazālī based religion on philosophical scepticism—a rather unsafe basis for religion and not wholly justified by the spirit of the Qurʾān. (3; see also 102)

In this passage, Iqbāl makes three related points: first, that the spirit of Qurʾānic thought stands in sharp contrast to the spirit of Greek thought;[3] second, that Muslims of early centuries only belatedly came to realize that Qurʾānic thought was antithetical to Greek; and, third, that Ghazālī, though he recognized the divergence between Qurʾānic and Greek thought, failed to interpret the divergence correctly, consequently basing religion on shaky grounds.

Iqbāl's formulation of the first point is probably unique to him; the difference between Qurʾānic thought and Greek thought, though noted before Iqbāl, had been stated in propositional terms (the Qurʾānic pronouncements on the eternity of the world or on God's knowledge of particulars run counter to the Greek) and not, as was done by Iqbāl, in terms of the distinction between the empirical and the nonempirical (the honey bee vs. the human world) (3). Furthermore, there is a deep connection between the Qurʾānic empirical outlook on the one hand and the birth of inductive intellect and the Islamic doctrine of the finality of prophethood on the other:

> The birth of Islam . . . is the birth of inductive intellect. In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that, in order to achieve full self-consciousness, man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to

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[3] Alessandro Bausani, a distinguished Iqbāl scholar, remarks: "And we cannot but agree with Iqbâl when he says that the genuine Coranic spirit is anti-classical" (1950, 139).

> reason and experience in the Qurʾān, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality. (101)

While the idea of the finality of prophethood is culturally significant in that it ushered in the age of inductive intellect, it is psychologically significant in that it cures minds of "the perpetual [Magian] attitude of expectation, a constant looking forward to the coming of Zoroaster's unborn sons, the Messiah, or the Paraclete," for this "attitude of constant expectation . . . tends to give a false view of history" (115). Such an attitude, that is to say, puts the burden of the redemption of humanity on an individual possessed of supernatural ability, absolving ordinary people of the need and obligation to determine their own fate through struggle and actively to work out their own salvation. Iqbāl praises Ibn Khaldūn for cutting the ground from under messianic or redemptive theories, though Iqbāl himself deserves credit for highlighting this aspect of Ibn Khaldūn's thought, just as he deserves credit for stating clearly the hitherto dimly perceived connection between the empirical outlook and the dogma of the finality of prophethood.

In regard to the second point, Iqbāl implies that Muslim thinkers' late realization of the fundamental difference between Qurʾānic thought and Greek thought allowed Greek modes of thinking to establish themselves in Islamic culture and, in turn, exercise a major—often negative—influence on Islamic thought, leading, for example, to the rise of "various schools of scholastic theology under the inspiration of Greek thought" (3) and, concomitantly, Iqbāl also implies, to inhibition of authentically Qurʾānic modes of thinking.

The third point, concerning Ghazālī's search for a basis for religion, is explained by Iqbāl as follows: "Ghazālī, finding no hope in analytic thought, moved to mystic experience, and there found an independent content for religion. In this way he succeeded in securing for religion the right to exist independently of science and metaphysics" (4). But in doing so, Ghazālī drew "a line of cleavage between thought and intuition" (4). Admittedly, Iqbāl's discussion of the relationship between thought and intuition is problematic, since at times he affirms the independence of thought from intuition—thought he says, provides an independent, and no less effective, access to the Ultimate Reality—but at times he says that "thought and intuition are organically related" (4; also 2; Rahman 1972, 45–46). But this apparent lack of consistency in Iqbāl's view of the relationship between thought and intuition does not detract from Iqbāl's appraisal of Ghazālī. One can say that the Muslim reaction against classical thought or Greek philosophy created a general distrust in the ability of reason to lead to certitude or indubitable truth—at least that was the view Ghazālī himself took of the matter—and it is this distrust in analytic thought that led Ghazālī to posit intuition, or mystic insight, as the basis of religion.

While it was "the general empirical attitude of the Qurʾān which engendered in its followers a feeling of reverence for the actual and ultimately made them the founders of modern science" (11; also 14), the empirical in the Qurʾān is not divorced from the spiritual; in fact, the Qurʾān recognizes that "the empirical attitude is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity" (12). Iqbāl is stating in philosophical language the familiar Qurʾānic idea that nature and its phenomena are *āyāt*, "signs" or "symbols" pointing to higher realities, especially God, the highest reality.

27.3.3. The Human Ego

Man, says Iqbāl, is possessed of "a unique individuality" (76), which does not reside in his physical body but rather constitutes his ego—or selfhood or personality.[4] The reality of the ego is undeniable,[5] "even though that reality is too profound to be intellectualized" (79). The ego—"the 'I', as a free centre of experience" (114)—has as its own center a "unity of human consciousness" (77)[6] or a "unity of inner experience,"[7] which, as noted earlier, the Qurʾān regards as a source of knowledge, along with two others, history and nature. "The ego reveals itself as a unity of . . . mental states" (79); it has a "directive function" (82),[8] and "the element of guidance and directive control in [its] activity shows that the ego is a free personal causality" (86). Furthermore, the ego, whose characteristics include freedom (85) and spontaneity (84), "shares in the life and freedom of the Ultimate Ego" (86–87), "and one way in which it does so is through prayer" (87). Although "the ego, in its finitude, is imperfect as a unity of life . . . its nature is wholly aspiration after a unity more inclusive, more effective, more balanced, and unique" (87). That is to say, the finite ego tends toward the Infinite or Ultimate Ego—or, in Islamic terminology, God (Allāh) (50)—but the highest goal for the finite ego is not the shedding of its finitude, but the retaining of "full self-possession, even in the case of a direct contact with the all-embracing Ego" (93–94). Or, as Iqbāl says: "the finite ego must be *distinct*, though not *isolated* from the Infinite" (94). Death is the door through which the finite ego must pass to meet the Infinite, but resurrection is "nothing more than a kind of stock-taking of the ego's past achievements and his future possibilities" (96), and only beings fortified by ego-sustaining acts in their lifetime will survive the shock, and will then continue to grow (95, 96). "Personal immortality, then, is not ours as of right; it is to be achieved by personal effort. Man is only a candidate for it" (95).

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[4] Iqbāl sometimes uses the word "soul" as a synonym for "ego": "The system of experiences we call soul or ego is also a system of acts" (84), but he is careful not to term it "a kind of finer matter or a mere accident" (77) or to impute "substance" to it, as was done by Muslim theologians (77, 80).

[5] Iqbāl discusses briefly Bradley's unsuccessful attempt to deny reality to the human ego (78). "Yet, however thought may dissect and analyse, our feeling of egohood is ultimate and is powerful enough to extract from Professor Bradley the reluctant admission of its reality" (79).

[6] This unity of consciousness, Iqbāl adds, "never really became a point of interest in the history of Muslim thought" (79).

[7] "Inner experience is the ego at work" (82).

[8] Also: "My whole reality lies in my directive attitude. You cannot perceive me like a thing 'in space,' or a set of experiences in temporal order; you must interpret, understand, and appreciate me in my judgements, in my will-attitudes, aims, and aspirations" (83).

Iqbāl's analysis of man's uniqueness in terms of a real, permanent, free, directive, and potentially immortal ego has internal coherence, but it is of interest primarily not because of its factual or logical accuracy—on which judgment can be passed on other grounds—but because he approaches the subject from a psychological viewpoint, unlike early Muslim thinkers whose main interest in the subject was theological or metaphysical. In this respect, as in others, Iqbāl proves himself to be in tune with modern developments in knowledge.

It is because he takes a psychological view of the ego that Iqbāl is able to see the ego as a dynamic entity instead of conceiving it in essentialist terms. The ego grows by interacting with the environment:

> We appreciate the ego itself in the act of perceiving, judging, and willing. The life of the ego is a kind of tension caused by the ego invading the environment and the environment invading the ego. The ego does not stand outside this arena of mutual invasion. It is present in it as a directive energy and is formed and disciplined by its own experience. (82)

In saying that the properly cultivated human ego is destined to survive as an entity that is distinct but not isolated from the Infinite Ego, or God, Iqbāl criticizes pantheistic Sufism, according to which man's highest goal should be to annihilate himself in God, just as a drop of water loses its identity upon merging into the ocean. As Iqbāl puts it: "Whatever may be the final fate of man it does not mean the loss of individuality. The Qurʾān does not contemplate complete liberation from finitude as the highest state of human bliss" (93; Hassan 2008, 166).

Finally, Iqbāl's assertion that the human ego is "a free personal causality"—perhaps the most important point he makes about the ego—is meant to set the human being free from what Iqbāl calls "a morally degrading Fatalism" (88).

So far we have talked about the human ego, or the human self, along with its characteristics, as constituting man's uniqueness; the ego is, in this respect, distinguished from the body. This self is what, in a related context—that of the nature of time—Iqbāl calls the appreciative self, as distinguished from the efficient self. The efficient self is "the practical self of daily life in its dealing with the external order of things" (38), whereas the appreciative self deals with the inner life of consciousness. The distinction between the two sides of the self will become clearer in our treatment of Iqbāl's concept of time.

27.3.4. Serial Time and Real Time

Following Bergson, Iqbāl distinguishes between serial time and real time, or *durée*, "pure duration unadulterated by space" (39). Serial time is atomic and is made up of a succession of discontinuous instants, whereas real time, in which past, present, and future exist simultaneously, is free from the succession of discrete moments. Serial time is historical time, whereas real time is Divine Time, being free from the limiting labels of past, present, and future. Serial time is apprehended intellectually, and is the time in which lives man's efficient self, whereas real time is not cognized but is felt intuitively, and is the time in which lives man's appreciative self (see subsection 27.3.3 above). The following quote, though a little long, brings out the crucial distinction between the efficient self and the appreciative self:

> In our constant pursuit after external things we weave a kind of veil round the appreciative self which thus becomes completely alien to us. It is only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience. In the life-process of this deeper ego the states of consciousness melt into each other. The unity of the appreciative ego is like the unity of the germ in which the experiences of its individual ancestors exist, not as a plurality, but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole. There is no numerical distinctness of states in the totality of the ego, the multiplicity of whose elements is, unlike that of the efficient self, wholly qualitative. There is change and movement, but change and movement are indivisible; their elements interpenetrate and are wholly non-serial in character. It appears that the time of the appreciative-self is a single "now" which the efficient self, in its traffic with the world of space, pulverizes into a series of "nows" like pearl beads in a thread. Here is, then, pure duration unadulterated by space. . . . It is, however, impossible to express this inner experience of pure duration in words, for language is shaped on the serial time of our daily efficient self. . . . The appreciative self, then, is more or less corrective of the efficient self, inasmuch as it synthesizes all the "heres" and "nows"—the small changes of space and time, indispensable to the efficient self—into the coherent wholeness of personality. Pure time, then, as revealed by a deeper analysis of our conscious experience, is not a string of separate, reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in, the present. And the future is given to it not as lying before, yet to be traversed; it is given only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility. It is time regarded as an organic whole that the Qurʾān describes as *Taqdīr* or the destiny—a word which has been so much misunderstood both in and outside the world of Islam. Destiny is time regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities. It is time freed from the net of causal sequence—the diagrammatic character which the logical understanding imposes on it. (38–40)

Whether Iqbāl's distinction between serial time or real time agrees with Bergson's in most or some details is certainly a relevant issue,[9] but more important in our context is the question, What purpose does the distinction serve in Iqbāl's thought, and how does it help him promote his agenda of reform or reconstruction?

Iqbāl employs the distinction between serial time and duration to solve certain issues in Islamic thought. Bausani identifies these problems as "concepts of creation, history, community, destiny, free will, death and immortality," and explains how Iqbāl's

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[9] Iqbāl himself is critical of some aspects of Bergson's concept of time—for example, of Bergson's view that Reality lacks a teleological character, since teleology robs time of reality (43). Bausani compares Bergson's and Iqbāl's views on this subject. Bausani 1954, 161. See also Sharif 1983, 376 ff.

"philosophical-religious position" offers solutions to these issues (Bausani 1954, 164–77). We will select for treatment and comment only one of these issues, that of destiny, which is, as Iqbāl notes, often incorrectly interpreted as fatalism. If duration is "time regarded as an organic whole," a whole not yet divided into past, present, and future, then by participating in duration one puts oneself beyond the pale of predestination, takes a view of reality that is yet to unfold in the form of particular incidents, and is, from this vantage point, in a position to control the unfolding of destiny—since destiny is "time regarded prior to the disclosure of its possibilities"—and freely and creatively to shape the events yet to occur. This, at least, is a possibility from a philosophical standpoint (162). But, of course, solving a problem philosophically does not necessarily mean solving it on a practical plane as well. So how does one come out of serial time and enter into real time, and how does one's injection of oneself intuitively into real time, or Divine Time, enable one to influence the unfolding of the undifferentiated unity of events in real time in the form of isolated events in serial time? Several points need to be kept in mind.

First, a fundamental assumption in Iqbāl's universe of ideas is that "the ultimately character of Reality is spiritual" (31; also 49, 57, 123), a conviction that finds expression in Iqbāl's work in various context (33), for example: "all human life is spiritual in its origin" (116); "consciousness is a variety of the purely spiritual principle of life" (33); "the hypothesis of matter as an independent existence is perfectly gratuitous" (83); and "matter is spirit in space-time reference" (122).

Second, Iqbāl believes that the ultimate goal in religion is contact with the highest Reality, the following statement of his being especially relevant to our present discussion:

> [R]eligious ambition soars higher than the ambition of philosophy. Religion is not satisfied with mere conception; it seeks a more intimate knowledge of and association with the object of its pursuit. The agency through which this association is achieved is the act of worship or prayer ending in spiritual illumination. (70–71)

To Iqbāl, then, meditation or worship, which in Islam takes a specific form, that of prayer, enables one to make contact with the Ultimate Reality (without being absorbed in that Reality, as noted above), and, concomitantly, to enter into real time, which alone is Divine Time, and once there, to be privy to and participate in what Iqbāl calls "life and boundless power which recognizes no obstruction" (88). It is through prayer that one wins release from nonserial time. As Iqbāl says in a similar context: "Prayer in Islam is the ego's escape from mechanism to freedom" (87).

Third, Iqbāl's philosophical reflections, whether involving destiny or other matters, have an important—practical—side to them. Iqbāl's purpose in treating philosophical questions was not to present ivory-tower solutions to them, solutions that have no bearing on actual human life; it was to help his addressees build a certain perspective or attitude of mind, for, as we noted in the beginning, reform of thought is, to Iqbāl, a necessary prerequisite for reform of conduct. By demonstrating that philosophical difficulties in regard to the issue of, for example, destiny can be dealt with plausibly from a philosophical standpoint, Iqbāl hopes to break the shackles of mind and to clear the ground for the presentation of the positive message he wishes to convey.

27.3.5. *Ijtihād*

Literally "effort" or "endeavor," *ijtihād* as an Islamic technical term means "informed independent judgment," since the *mujtahid*, the religious scholar engaging in *ijtihād*, exerts himself systematically and responsibly to arrive at a valid ruling on a legal matter on which the primary sources of Islamic legislation, namely, the Qurʾān and the *Sunna* (Muḥammad's normative practice), are silent. *Ijtihād* is opposed in Islamic law to *taqlīd*, unquestioning or uncritical obedience to authority.[10] In its generic formulation, the issue of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* has, *mutatis mutandis*, arisen in all traditions, religious or secular. As one would expect, it is a major issue in Islamic thought, and has, depending on the social, political, and other circumstances of the times, surfaced with greater force in certain periods of history; it was an important issue in the age in which Iqbāl lived, and it remains a burning issue today.

Iqbāl devotes chapter 6 of the *Reconstruction*, "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam," to a discussion of *ijtihād*. He confines his remarks to what may be called primary *ijithād*, which pertains to the fundamentals of Islam and was exercised by the founders of legal schools.[11] Iqbāl holds that the foundational principle of Islam is *tawḥīd*, or the oneness of God (126), whose "essence . . . as a working idea, is equality, solidarity, and freedom" (122), and that Islamic polity is "only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind" (117). Accordingly, Islamic society, which is based on this spiritual view of Reality, "must reconcile the categories of permanence and change" (117). But while "the Qurʾān . . . embodies an essentially dynamic outlook on life" (118), in Islamic law, surprisingly, the possibility of *ijtihād* was in effect negated after the establishment of the schools of law, and Islamic law was thus "reduced . . . practically to a state of immobility" (118). Factors responsible for this state of affairs included, first, conservative Muslim attitudes, developed to preserve and organize Muslim social life, initially, in the face of a misunderstood rationalism, and, later, in reaction to the Baghdad catastrophe of 1258, and, second, the growth of speculative, otherworldly Sufism. But "the ultimate fate of a people does not depend so much on organization as on the worth and power of individual men" (120). Several prominent figures, at various times, and each in his own way, revolted against the rigid Muslim legalistic approaches. Iqbāl reviews the developments, along secular and religious lines, in modern Turkish political thought, and while he is critical of some liberalist aspects of that thought, he, in principle, approves of the fact that, like Ibn Khaldūn, Turkish thinkers accord greater importance to "the realities of experience" than to "the scholastic reasoning of jurists who lived and thought under different conditions of life." (125–26). Some of the intellectual developments in politics presage the hitherto overshadowed or displaced Islamic international ideal, but Muslim countries first need to become strong individually before they can form "a living family of republics" (126). Iqbāl then argues for the possibility of evolution in Islamic law by examining the four sources of that law—the Qurʾān, the Prophetic Tradition (*ḥadīth*), consensus (*ijmāʿ*), and analogy (*qiyās*), and also compares the general approaches of the major Sunnī legal schools. He concludes by observing that Europe lacks—but Islam possesses—the spiritual vision and the ultimate ideals that humanity needs today.

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[10] For a classical statement of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*, see Ghazālī 1324/1906, *Mustaṣfā*, 2:350–407. For a contemporary statement, see Hallaq 2009, *Sharīʿa*, especially 110–24.

[11] This *ijtihād* is to be distinguished from what may be termed secondary *ijtihād*, which is exercised within the limits of a given school of law, and tertiary *ijtihād*, which is exercised in regard to a particular issue left undiscussed by the founders of the schools. The terms used by Iqbal himself for the three degrees of *ijtihād* are "complete authority," "relative authority," and "special authority" (118). It should be noted that other typologies of *ijtihād* exist. For a slightly different typology, see Abū Zahra 1958, 365–73. See also Masud 1955, 17–18.

Iqbāl's view of *ijtihād* is notable on several counts. First, instead of dealing with *ijtihād* merely as a legal subject, as is commonly done, Iqbal puts it in the broader theological-philosophical context of Islam. A *tawḥīd*-oriented society, charged with translating the ideals of equality, solidarity, and freedom into practice, must hold firmly to certain eternal principles, but it cannot ignore the need to accommodate change, and *ijtihād* makes this accommodation possible. In exercising *ijtihād*, then, an Islamic society is not simply taking steps to ensure its own survival in time, it is carrying out one of its fundamental obligations, it is fulfilling its raison d'être.

Second, Iqbāl takes a balanced view of conservative and liberalist tendencies in Islamic history, noting their potential for good and ill. Conservatism, on account of its concern with preserving the integrity of social life, was responsible for immobilizing Islamic law in the past, but "healthy conservative criticism" can provide "a check on the rapid movement of liberalism in the world of Islam" (121). As for liberalism—Iqbāl has in mind certain developments in religious and political thought in modern Turkey: "We heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam," but "Liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration" (129). Thus, the choice between conservatism and liberalism is not a binary one, and a watchful attitude, making an allowance for the demands of continuity and change, is called for.

Third, Iqbāl's faith in the common man is reflected in his view of *ijtihād*. Traditionally, *ijtihād* has been regarded as the prerogative of the class of religious scholars, the *ʿulamāʾ*. In modern times, secularist elements in the Muslim world have proposed that the right of *ijtihād* should be exercised by popularly elected bodies, like parliaments, rather than by the *ʿulamāʾ*. But the proposal has been criticized on the grounds that its real or ulterior intent is to dislodge the *ʿulamāʾ* from their position of authority in Islamic society. Iqbāl accepts the basic idea of vesting the power of *ijtihād* in a legislative assembly, but he seems to be making two stipulations: first, that *ijtihād* should, in principle, be institutionalized rather than left to individual scholars (thus, Iqbāl agrees with the procedural aspect of the aforementioned proposal), and, second, that the legislative assembly "will secure contributions to legal discussion from *laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs*" (138; emphasis added), implying that the involvement of laymen in legislative activity is not intended to deny the *ʿulamāʾ* the right of *ijtihād*, but to enrich the quality of *ijtihād* by drawing on the often valuable insights of common people (139–40).

27.4. OTHER IDEAS

The foregoing is an account of several, but not all, of the key ideas of the *Reconstruction*. Brief notes on a few more ideas, which in some cases overlap or intersect those discussed above, are in order. The chapter or chapters in which a given idea is mainly treated in the *Reconstruction* are cited at the end of the relevant passage.

27.4.1. Thought and Being

Being, or *ontos*, in pure time, is a unity and is characterized by infinitude. Thought, too, is characterized by infinitude, and, "in its deeper movement . . . is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite" (5), that is, thought has the ability to apprehend "the Ultimate Reality which reveals its symbols both within [man] and without" (12). But, in its analytical capacity, and because it is allied with serial time, thought, simulating "finitude and inconclusiveness," (4), partitions Being's unity and turns its infinitude into a multiplicity of finitudes, doing so in the interest of making conceptualization possible, since "it is with the weapon of . . . conceptual knowledge that man approaches the observable aspect of Reality" (11). Iqbāl sums up: "It is a mistake to regard thought as inconclusive, for it too, in its own way, is a greeting of the finite with the infinite" (5). Iqbāl discusses the relationship between thought and being in connection with Ghazālī's view that analytic thought, because of its finitude, is incapable of furnishing a basis for religion, which deals with the Ultimate, or Infinite, Reality, and that only mystic experience can provide that basis (4; see also subsection 27.3.2 above). By urging that the finitude of thought is only simulated, and that thought, "in its deeper movement," is quite capable of reaching the infinite, and, furthermore, that there is an organic relationship between thought and intuition, Iqbāl seeks to invalidate Ghazālī's view (chapter 1).

27.4.2. Religion and Science

The motif of concord of religion and science runs through the *Reconstruction*. After noting in the preface to the book that modern developments in physics are calling materialism into question (xlv–xlvi; also 27), he remarks that "the day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies" (xlvi)—an observation, interestingly, in which science appears to be conceding ground to religion and moving toward a position that religion would support rather than the other way round. Iqbāl talks about the aims and methods of religion and science. Religion and science share the aim of "reaching the most real" (155), but they differ in the methods they use to accomplish that goal: science seeks to grasp the observable aspect of reality, employs sense perception to that end, and takes a sectional view even of the phenomenal reality, the domain proper to it, whereas religion, employing intuition, takes a holistic view of reality, seeking to comprehend "the inner nature of reality" (155). Again, however, the results obtained through the religious process are, no less than those obtained through the scientific process, subject to scrutiny: "to both [religion and science] the way to pure objectivity lies through what may be called the purification of experience" (155). It should be added that Iqbāl's views on religion and science are connected with the vitalistic aspect of his philosophy, a connection that leads him, at times, to make rather assertive statements like the following:

> It seems that the method of dealing with Reality by means of concepts is not at all a serious way of dealing with it. Science does not care whether its electron is a real entity or not. It may be a mere symbol, a mere convention. Religion, which is essentially a mode of actual living, is the only serious way of handling Reality. (145)

Ultimately, however, in Iqbāl's view, the religious and scientific processes are complementary to each other (chapters 2, 7).

27.4.3. Conception of God

The Islamic view of God can be justified philosophically. The chief attributes of God, as stated by the Qurʾān, are individuality, infinity, creativeness, knowledge, omnipotence, and eternity. For His individuality to be perfect, God must not self-replicate, and so He must have no offspring; God's infinity is intensive, not spatial; His creativeness is not to be interpreted as "the act of creation as a specific past event [in which] the universe . . . has no organic relation to the life of its maker" (52), but rather as a creative act in which "the world of matter . . . is not a stuff co-eternal with God, operated upon by Him from a distance as it were . . . [but] is one continuous act which thought breaks up into a plurality of mutually exclusive things" (53); His knowledge is not omniscience in a passive sense, but a creative activity that includes the future as an open, undetermined possibility; His omnipotence is related to his wisdom, and so is not arbitrary in character; His eternity is his existence in pure or nonsuccessional time (61; Abdul Hakim 1963–66, 2:1625–27) (chapter 3).

27.4.4. The Universe and Man's Place in It

According to the Qurʾān, the universe, created by God for a purpose and dynamic in character, challenges man to conquer it and observe and reflect on the signs of God it holds. In meeting this challenge, man both fulfills the promise of the universe and shapes his own destiny, eventually rising, in the course of this creative activity—which is akin to worship—to a level where he and God become coworkers. Man had a beginning, but is meant to become a permanent part of the scheme of existence (9; also 152) (chapter 1).

27.4.5. Mystic versus Prophetic Consciousness

Both mystics and prophets have unitive experience, but for the mystic this experience is an end in itself, whereas for the prophet it is only a means to an end: the mystic does not wish to return from the experience, but the prophet does return from it, to society, using the insights gained in that experience to create a new cultural world:

> A prophet may be defined as a type of mystic consciousness in which "unitary experience" tends to overflow its boundaries, and seeks opportunities of redirecting or refashioning the forces of collective life. In his personality the finite centre of life sinks into his own infinite depths only to spring up again, with fresh vigour, to destroy the old, and to disclose the new directions of life. (100)

The prophet's return and his creative activity constitute what Iqbāl calls "the pragmatic test of the value of his religious experience" (99) (chapter 5).

27.5. THE ESSENTIAL LEGACY OF THE *RECONSTRUCTION*

What individual ideas in Iqbāl's *Reconstruction* (or, for that matter, in his oeuvre generally) are valid or have stood the test of time has been, and will remain, a subject of discussion. But the work has an enduring legacy as well.

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam is an invitation to Muslim intelligentsia, on the one hand, to embrace and value their intellectual and spiritual heritage, and, on the other, to undertake a reappraisal of that heritage with a view to discovering how it can provide the basis and inspiration for effectively coming to grips with the problems of today's radically changed world—after the character and dynamics of that world have been properly grasped: "The task before the modern Muslim is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past" (78). The following verse of Iqbāl's captures beautifully the nature of this mandate to remain faithful to the perennial ideals of Islam while cultivating the ability to deal with the realities of life:

Do embrace the mountains and deserts,
But your hands must not let go of the hem of the heavens.
(*Żarb-i Kalīm*, in *Kull.-U*, 582)

Iqbāl himself practices what he preaches. Throughout the *Reconstruction*, whether discussing the theological notion of atomism or the legal idea of *ijtihād* or whether dealing with the concept of prayer or of the human ego, whether explaining the nature of time or of mystic experience, or whether elucidating the relationship between thought and intuition or between space and time, Iqbāl is motivated and guided by the thought and desire to determine the relevance and worth of the matter under discussion in light of its conformity with Islamic principles and its viability in a modern context. A careful reader of the *Reconstruction* cannot fail to be impressed by the fact that, in the book, Iqbāl comes across as a thinker who is, on the one hand, confidently and firmly anchored in the larger Islamic intellectual and spiritual tradition, and, on the one hand, genuinely but critically open to modern developments in the field of thought. Iqbāl is willing to learn from European intellectual history, for "European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam," and, since medieval times, "infinite advance has taken place in the domain of human thought and experience." Accordingly, "it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us in the revision and reconstruction of theological thought in Islam" (6).

Iqbāl would be the last person to claim finality for his thought—in fact, he would, and does, oppose the idea:

> [T]here is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking. As knowledge advances and fresh avenues of thought are opened, other views, and probably sounder views than those set forth in these lectures, are possible. Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it. (xlvi)

The last sentence of this quote sums up what is probably the most essential part of the legacy of the *Reconstruction*. The book falls into the broad category of modern Muslim reformist writings. A major difference between the *Reconstruction* and works by other reformists consists in the long-standing view of matters taken in the *Reconstruction*. Most of the other reformist writings deal with the issue of Muslim decline and regeneration as one that needs, and could possibly have, a relatively quick solution in the form a series of measures that ought to be taken by Muslims; and the agenda of several of those writings either is explicitly or implicitly biased in favor of a given Muslim country or region or is approached from the vantage point of a theological, political, or some other such perspective. The *Reconstruction* is by and large free from such limitations. Iqbāl seems to be convinced that a fundamental change in the Muslim attitude is required, and that this change in turn calls for a complete overhaul of the Muslim worldview. He would, therefore, begin by laying the philosophical infrastructure that would provide the vision and the direction needed to build the superstructure of practical solutions. There is no better illustration of the long-term perspective taken in the *Reconstruction* than the opening words of the book, in which Iqbāl raises some of the so-called big questions of life:

> What is the character and general structure of the universe in which we live? Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to

> it? What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy? These questions are common to religion, philosophy, and higher poetry. (1)

Iqbāl does deal with issues pertaining specifically to certain Muslim lands, such as Turkey or India, but he does so being mindful of the implications of his discussion for the larger Muslim world. Likewise, he does employ categories of analysis peculiar to one or other discipline of knowledge, but he does so without prejudice to the general intellectual and spiritual tradition of Islam, and the transformative work of the *Reconstruction* is aimed at the Muslim *umma* in general rather than a particular Muslim community or region. It would not be incorrect or hyperbolic to say that, as a rule, Iqbāl, quite distinctively among modern Muslim thinkers, transcends the immediacy of the issues under discussion, viewing those issues *sub specie aeternitatis*.[12]

Iqbāl's approach to history constitutes an important element of his legacy. He takes an integrated view of Islamic history, noting connections between the events, developments, and movements in the social, legal, intellectual, and political spheres. For example, he explains Muslim conservative attitudes by reference to the need to maintain social order (see subsection 27.3.5. above), and believes that it was in the interest of the Umayyad and ʿAbbasid rulers "to leave the power of *Ijtihād* to individual *Mujtahids* rather than encourage the formation of a permanent assembly which might become too powerful for them" (138).

Iqbāl is obviously passionate about his subject—any good writer would be—but his style of treatment of that subject is remarkably dispassionate. For example, while Iqbāl on many occasions critiques this or that view, found in this or that Muslim or Western thinker or writer, he never adopts a polemical attitude, as, unfortunately, many modern Muslim reformists do. The scrupulously maintained academic tone in the book is an object lesson for Muslim thinkers and writers wishing to embark on a similar project. Especially notable is what Sheila McDonough calls Iqbāl's "balanced appreciation of western thought which remained characteristic of all his later writings about philosophy and religion" (1970, 16). One might add that Iqbāl's attitude toward that thought is balanced in the sense that Iqbāl takes neither a slavish nor a dismissive view of the dominant Western civilization, and so considers the body of Western thought an integral part of the larger and inevitable movement of progress of human thought with which Muslims must come to terms.

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[12] Cf. Majeed 2013, xxiv: "The *Reconstruction* . . . treats religious thought in Islam as uninflected by the geographical or cultural spaces in which it originated and lifts it above distortion by economic factors and linguistic and ethnic conflict. It approaches and reconstructs Islam primarily as a civilizational deterritorialized space, and as such, it echoes the strong pan-Islamist (and at times anti-national) dimension in his [Iqbāl's] major poetry."

27.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam is not an easy book to read. Its difficulty has been imputed to the poet-philosopher Iqbāl's mixing of poetical and philosophical styles of presentation (Rahman 1972, 45; Bausani, 1950, 137; Guillaume 1956, 160; also Majeed 2013, xvii–xviii). I am not sure of this explanation. Notwithstanding the "poetical" element in the language of the *Reconstruction*, Iqbāl, in my view, generally makes a fairly consistent use of his terminology, and expresses clearly enough his views on most of the subjects he treats. The principal reason for the difficulty of the *Reconstruction* would seem to reside in the book's highly compact and not infrequently allusive style of presentation. The pages of the *Reconstruction* are brimming over with the ideas and thoughts of a host of philosophers, theologians, mystics, poets, and scientists—ideas and thoughts that, together with Iqbāl's incisive comments, often follow one another in quick, sometimes abrupt, succession, making demands on comprehension. A case in point is a passage in chapter 5 where, in the space of under three hundred words, Iqbāl cites or refers, tersely—sometimes too tersely—but substantively, never vacuously or superficially, to the views and ideas of more than ten Muslim and European thinkers and scientists (102–3). The rather dense, high-caliber academic English in which the book is written had, even in Iqbāl's day, a very small readership—a readership, moreover, that was, for all its respect for Iqbāl, almost totally unprepared for the profound, sometimes recondite, discussions served by the *Reconstruction*.[13] Needless to say, a good companion to the *Reconstruction* is sorely needed.

The *Reconstruction* is Iqbāl's major work in prose, but several of the issues raised in it have been raised by him in other prose writings as well, and a fuller appreciation of Iqbāl's ideas as stated in the *Reconstruction* would require reading the *Reconstruction* in conjunction with those works. There is also the issue of the relationship between Iqbāl's prose and poetical works, perhaps the most neglected area in Iqbāl studies. My view, contrary to the common perception, is that a reading of the *Reconstruction* in light of Iqbāl's poetry—and vice versa—holds great promise. For the moment I will only mention, by way of example, that Iqbāl's discussion of the issue of destiny in the *Reconstruction* (subsection 27.3.4 above) and his statements on the subject in his poetry complement each other quite remarkably, the arguments and observation offered in the

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[13] Scholarly accolades for the *Reconstruction* have, of course, not been lacking. For example, Gibb remarks that "one looks in vain for any systematic analysis of new currents of thought in the Muslim world," and then says: "The one outstanding example is the Indian scholar and poet, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, who in his six lectures on *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* faces outright the question of reformulating the basic ideas of Muslim theology" (Gibb 1947, ix–x; also 59–60). McDonough, after expressing her admiration for Iqbāl's poetical work—"There is nothing in the Muslim or the Western tradition that can quite be compared to Iqbāl's poetic enterprise"—says of the *Reconstruction*: "As with the poetry, there is nothing that can be compared to it" (McDonough 1970, 17). "Strictly speaking," says Fazlur Rahman, referring to the *Reconstruction*, "the only philosopher of modern Islam is Sir Muhammad Iqbāl" (1972, 43).

Reconstruction providing strong philosophical support for the exhortative message presented in Iqbāl's poetry.

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CHAPTER 28

MUḤAMMAD BĀQIR AL-ṢADR (D. 1979) ON THE LOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INDUCTION

SALEH J. AGHA

Considering his lifework's overall achievement, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr is, at one level, not an atypical figure. He is very much a child of his times, a prominent Iraqi Shīʿī jurisprudent and philosopher whose output in the 1950s–1970s reflects the political, intellectual, and religious concerns and challenges of his era, as well as the rigorous standards of his chosen disciplines.

At another level, he is certainly remarkable, mostly because of the breadth of his theoretical and practical concerns, but—for our purposes—particularly for trying to respond to the Western intellectual and philosophical challenge to the Islamic worldview by engaging that challenge on its own terms. While his success in that endeavor may seem debatable, the result is an output that is recognizable as a contribution to the modern Western philosophical tradition.

The outlines of his life are fairly well known.[1] He was born in 1935 in Kazimiyya in Iraq into a family of religious scholars famous for their learning. In 1945, the family moved to Najaf, the chief Iraqi shrine city and center of Shīʿī learning, where he studied, taught, wrote, published, engaged in political and various other intellectual activities, and established himself as a major Shīʿī cleric, scholar, and opponent of Saddam Hussein's regime, which eventually led to his brutal execution at that regime's hands in 1980. In between, his main concern seems to have been to rejuvenate and update Islamic thought, bringing it to bear on the concerns of his times and making it accessible and relevant to his contemporaries. To that end, he wrote prolifically on Islamic jurisprudence and the sources (*uṣūl*) of the Law, on Islamic economics, on Shīʿism, on philosophy in general, and on logic, as well as on a variety of other subjects.

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[1] For details of Ṣadr's life, an overall view of his output with special attention to his contributions to Islamic jurisprudence, and the general political background to his work, see Mallat 1993, 1–19.

Ṣadr's political activism was intimately connected to his overall philosophical concerns—the renewal and defense of the Islamic outlook and tradition—which in turn were linked to his jurisprudential concerns. Although communism was the perceived main political challenge to Islam in Iraq, particularly after the 1958 Revolution, the root of the challenge was the perceived Western scientific/materialistic attitude to the world, with its great advances and powerful technological innovations that enabled the West to impose its political and—more dangerously for a defender of the Islamic outlook—cultural and intellectual hegemony on the rest of the world. Both communism and the liberal outlook were products of that attitude, sharing similar philosophical underpinnings. Both seemed to propose an entire way of life that seemed to imperil traditional forms and mores. And both seemed more attractive to the Muslim youth of the Middle East and the Islamic world in general, threatening to draw them away from religion.

As a result, it seemed to many that a response to the challenge of the West could not be adequate unless it addressed the philosophical underpinnings of the Western outlook on both right and left. This is the task that Ṣadr seems to have set for himself. To this end, he wrote a major treatise on Islamic economics, as well as two treatises devoted entirely to philosophy. The first of these—*Falsafatuna* (*Our Philosophy*)—published in 1959, was explicitly aimed at refuting "dialectical materialist" or Marxist tendencies, though in the process Ṣadr also raised some epistemological and metaphysical issues. But Ṣadr's main philosophical work is the work we shall be considering here, *al-Usus al-manṭiqiyya li-l istiqra'* (*The Logical Foundations of Induction*).[2]

28.1. SADR ON THE "INDUCTIVE GAP": AN OVERVIEW

As its title indicates, Ṣadr's treatise is concerned with "the logical foundations of induction." It starts by contrasting induction with deduction, defining the latter as inference in which the conclusion is never more general than the premises. Induction by contrast is defined as inference in which we move from particular premises to general conclusions, the primary format of which is

(1) 1. All *known F's* are *G's*.
2. Therefore, all *F's* are *G's*.

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[2] References in the text are to the edition published by Dar At-Ta'aruf, Beirut, 1990. The earliest edition I could find was published in 1972, by Dar al-Fikr, Beirut.

This definition is in terms of the relative generality of the premises and conclusion of an argument. Another way of distinguishing induction from deduction is by the degree to which the premises of an argument warrant the conclusion. In deduction, the truth of the premises of an argument provides an absolute guarantee of the truth of the conclusion by necessitating the latter. By contrast, in an inductive argument, though the truth of the premises of an argument may provide some warrant for the truth of its conclusion, that warrant falls short of an absolute guarantee; the truth of the premises renders the conclusion's truth likely.

The two ways of defining induction are not equivalent;[3] but the second way highlights the fact that there is no possibility of "justifying" induction if that requires showing that the truth of the premises of an inductive argument will necessitate the truth of its conclusion. Doing so would be tantamount to finding ways of converting a contingent relationship (between the truth of the premises and conclusions of an inductive argument) into a necessary relationship; what is contingent, however, is by definition the contradictory of what is necessary.

As Ṣadr puts it in the introduction to his book, there is a "gap" in induction that emerges clearly when we notice that, while deduction can supposedly be justified by appeal to the law of noncontradiction, nothing corresponds to such "justification" in the case of induction (7). Ṣadr's book tries to fill this "gap" by providing the missing "justification."

There are two strategies for providing such "justification." We can argue that, though the premises of an inductive argument do not by themselves necessitate its conclusion, there are additional a priori premises that we accept independently and that transform a strong inductive argument into a valid deductive argument. Or we can accept that the conclusion of an inductive argument does not necessarily follow from its premises, but argue that the premises make the conclusion more probable.

Ṣadr considers both strategies. He attributes the former to the "rationalists" but finds it wanting. He criticizes the second strategy and proceeds to present his alternative views.

But, as noted earlier, Ṣadr's ultimate aim is not purely epistemological or logical. The epistemology and logic are part of a larger project that is encapsulated in the subtitle of his book—*A New Study of Induction That Aims to Discover the Common Logical Basis of the Natural Sciences and Faith in God*. Assuming that the natural sciences rely on some form of inductive reasoning, the ultimate aim is to show that that sort of reasoning can lead to certainty both in the natural sciences and as regards faith in God.

In that sense, Ṣadr's work falls within a standard tradition in modern academic philosophy that tries to reconcile science with religion. Still, it would be misleading to present his project as no more than an academic exercise or another inductive proof for the existence of God.

Part of the background to the work is religious jurisprudential, having to do with Ṣadr's wider interest as a Muslim jurist in providing rigorous foundations for Islamic law and the ways it can derive specific rulings from the sources (*uṣūl*) of religion. It seems to have been Ṣadr's aim to expand traditional Islamic jurisprudence's horizon by arguing that much of human knowledge is based on equally reliable nondeductive methods of reasoning that can perhaps be applied in the religious sciences as well.[4]

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[3] For a discussion of the shortcomings of defining induction in terms of the relative generality of premises and conclusion of an argument, see Skyrms 1986, 13–15.

But another part has to do with the wider cultural milieu in which Ṣadr was active, the milieu of the 1950s–1970s Islamic world in which the traditional religious outlook was being challenged at various levels—political, social, economic, scientific, and institutional—by Westernized secular schools of thought from left and right. The evident achievements of the natural sciences, for which God seems "a hypothesis they can do without," as well as the enormous power, triumphs, and successes of Western states and societies, with their nontraditionalist secular outlook and innovative political and economic structures, were driving many of the educated classes in the Islamic world away from religion and traditional modes of thought and life. In that respect, Ṣadr's book is an attempt to respond to these secular challenges by showing that there is nothing threatening in the scientific outlook as such to religion and its attitude to life.

With the exception of the attempt to prove the existence of God, these broader issues, however, are not mentioned in this book, which focuses on logical and epistemological issues and falls into four sections. The first two are criticisms of attempts hitherto made to deal with the problem of induction, focusing on what Ṣadr refers to as the "rationalist Aristotelian" approach and the empiricist approach. The third section contains the main substance of the book and lays the foundations for Ṣadr's main epistemological contribution. Knowledge is seen as growing along two axes, objective and subjective. Objective growth is based on deduction and the theory of probability, and Ṣadr proceeds to sketch the outline of a formal probability calculus, discusses and rejects what he deems to be the main interpretations of probability in the literature, suggests an alternative interpretation, then moves on to show how this fits into an account of the objective growth in knowledge. Subjective growth of knowledge is then discussed, and it is argued that it is here that we can seek the solution for "the problem of induction." The solution, however, is openly admitted to be based on a fundamental assumption that is crucial for the argument and that, if I understand it rightly, seems unsatisfactory. The fourth and last section investigates the main points of the theory of knowledge in light of the results of the previous section, arguing among other things that faith in God can be justified by the same means used by the sciences.

Ṣadr's book is written in a rigorous analytic style that is admirable in its clarity, depth, and breadth. His project is ambitious, and it would be impossible to do justice within the confines of a short chapter to the many ideas and arguments presented in the book. At most, I can try to briefly sketch what he says in some of the sections of his book, making a few critical comments as I proceed.

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[4] According to Roy Mottahedeh, the book under consideration "is an attempt (deemed important but not entirely successful) to give a larger role to inductive reasoning in Islamic higher learning." See Mottahedeh 2003, 22.

28.2. SADR ON ARISTOTLE ON INDUCTION

Ṣadr starts off his discussion of Aristotelian logic's treatment of induction—which he also refers to as the "rationalist" treatment—by noting that that logic distinguishes between perfect and imperfect induction. In a perfect induction, the general conclusion follows simply because all instances are enumerated in the premises. In an imperfect induction, by contrast, the general conclusion goes beyond the instances enumerated in the premises. Thus, while imperfect induction is generally of the format (1) mentioned in the previous section, perfect induction typically has the following format:

(2) 1. s_1 is G, s_2 is G, . . ., s_n is G.
2. s_1, s_2,. . ., s_n are all the *F's* there are.
3. Therefore, all *F's* are *G's*.

In addition, Ṣadr notes that perfect induction occupies a special place in Aristotle's overall picture of science. According to Ṣadr, Aristotle argues that the first principles of the sciences cannot be shown to be true by deduction, on the pain of infinite regress. Therefore, there must be a way of proving the first principles of our sciences by means other than the deductive syllogism. This other way is supposedly provided by perfect induction.[5]

A perfect induction seems like a valid deduction and raises no special problems; so Ṣadr's focus is on imperfect induction. "Induction," of course, is the translation of Aristotle's Greek term *epagoge*, whose meaning seems broader than its English counterpart. For example, *epagoge* is not confined to inferences from a number of perceived instances to a generalization. It may refer to a survey of the use of a particular word to resolve a certain puzzle. Moreover, as one of the cardinal methods of dialectic, it "must begin from the *endoxa*, what is accepted by all or most men or by the wise" (Owen 1961, 87–88), which need not be particular perceptions.

Moreover, Aristotle thinks that *epagoge* does more than merely enumerate. The result of an enumeration is the discovery of a deeper rational connection between the *F's* and the *G's* (Ross 1967, 38–40). And it has been argued that such discovery need not be because the induction provides a *proof* of any sort. Rather, a consideration of particular instances leads us to accept a certain generalization as true without the particular instances in any way *proving* the generalization.[6]

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[5] This seems like an oversimplification of Aristotle's complex views concerning how first principles are established. See in this regard, Irwin 1988.

[6] "Aristotle frequently says that something can be seen by induction when he wants an alternative way of showing a conclusion to be true, apart from proof" (Hamlyn 1976, 168).

Furthermore, while Aristotle is certainly concerned with exploring the ways we come to know the first principles of a given science, it is debatable whether he is concerned with skeptical worries regarding the possibility of such knowledge. He seems to take that possibility for granted, and to be primarily concerned with showing how these first principles *actually become* known (Hamlyn 1976, 167–84). More specifically, his concern was with how we lead someone, or how we ourselves move, toward insight (*nous*) into a universal by pointing to particular cases.[7]

Part of the sting of this criticism is numbed by Ṣadr's tendency to oscillate between speaking of "Aristotelian logic" and speaking of Aristotle himself.[8] This makes it difficult to charge him with misrepresenting Aristotle. Anyway, the discussion below will ignore this issue.

28.2.1. Imperfect Induction

So Ṣadr focuses on what he takes to be the ordinary understanding of *imperfect* induction, and proceeds to raise the customary philosophical objections to it. We can regloss what he says in this regard as follows:

On the ordinary understanding, there are a number of steps in the inductive leap from observing particular *A*-type phenomena—for example, heat—being followed by particular *B*-type phenomena—for example, the expansion of a piece of iron—to the general conclusion that (ceteris paribus) all *A*-type phenomena will be followed by *B*-type phenomena. Ordinary reasoning proceeds as follows:

(1) We notice that *A* has always been followed by *B*.
(2) We assume that nothing occurs without a cause; so if a *B*-type phenomenon occurs, it must have some natural cause.
(3) We conclude that *A* causes *B*.
(4) We assume that to say that, if *A* causes *B*, then (ceteris paribus) whenever *A* occurs it will be followed by *B*.
(5) We conclude that whenever *A* occurs it will (ceteris paribus) be followed by *B*.

In this reasoning, (1) is an observation, (2) and (4) are basic assumptions, (3) is a conclusion from (1) and (2), and (5) is a conclusion from (3) and (4). Since (1) is uncontroversial, and the deduction from (3) and (4) to (5) seems valid, the questions we are left with are the following:

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[7] Engberg-Pedersen 1979, 301–19. The issue is debatable, however. See, for example, Irwin 1988, 491 n. 20.

[8] His footnotes mention a number of classical Arabic texts on logic when referring to "Aristotelian logic."

(a) Is (2) warranted?
(b) Is (4) warranted?
(c) Is the step from (1) and (2) to (3) valid?

Regarding question (c), Ṣadr rightly argues that this implication as it stands is invalid. Of course, to say this is to say that regular conjunction is possible without causality—in other words, that the regular conjunction was a mere accident or coincidence. It is this issue on which Ṣadr focuses in his discussion of Aristotle's alleged views on imperfect induction.

To sum up then, according to Ṣadr, there are three elements in Aristotelian logic's justification of imperfect induction:

1. The claim that nothing happens without a cause—our assumption (2) above, which seems to be a version of the *Principle of Sufficient Reason* (PSR).
2. That claim that constant conjunction implies causality—the step from (1) and (2) to (3) above, which we can refer to as the *Conjunction-Implies-Causation Principle* (C/C).
3. The claim that causality implies lawlike regularity—our assumption (4) above, which I shall refer to as the *Principle of the Nomological Nature of Causality* (PNNC).

As for the first and third elements, Ṣadr says that, although Aristotelian logic does not try to justify them, the "rationalist philosophy" of that logic treats both as rational a priori principles (27). That they are so is something he does not dispute. This leaves C/C as the only principle needing justification (27–28). And the way Aristotelian logic tries to justify C/C is by basing it on another rational a priori principle, which I shall call

> *The No-Coincidence Principle* (NCP): If a conjunction is repeated either always or for the most part, then that conjunction is not a coincidence.

In effect, Ṣadr argues, Aristotelian logic relies on three a priori principles in justifying imperfect induction—PSR, PNNC, and NCP. Imperfect induction is not a mere invalid leap from observed constant conjunction to a generalization. Such inference, unmediated by the further assumptions above, would indeed be logically unjustifiable. But what happens when we add NCP is that the inference turns into a *deductive* syllogism, with that principle as the major premise, the statement regarding the recurrent observations as the minor premise, and with the generalization as the conclusion (31).[9] From these three a priori principles, Aristotelian logic argues that an observed constant conjunction can be securely projected into the future.

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[9] Major premise: Repeatedly conjoined events are causally linked (NCP).
Minor premise: *A*'s and *B*'s are repeatedly conjoined.
Conclusion: *A*'s and *B*'s are causally linked.

Although he himself believes in rational a priori principles, Ṣadr does not believe that the NCP is such a principle. So it is on the justification of this principle that the rest of his discussion of the Aristotelian treatment of imperfect induction focuses.

NCP speaks of "coincidence." But we should distinguish between absolute and relative coincidences. An absolute coincidence is when something occurs without it being at all necessitated by something—in other words, when it occurs without being caused; but that seems ruled out by PSR. A relative coincidence, however, does not violate that principle. It is when two events, each occurring for a cause, happen to coincide—for example, when one volume of water subjected to heat boils and another volume cooled down freezes and the two events happen at the same time. Each event is caused, but their happening at the same time may not be.

The distinctive mark of a relative coincidence is that, although it is possible, it does not recur often (39). Aristotelian logic takes off from this fact in arguing that NCP is a rational a priori principle. By "coincidence" it means relative coincidence. So the principle should now be reformulated as follows:

> NCP: If a conjunction is repeated either always or for the most part, then that conjunction is not a *relative* coincidence.

The problem, however, is that NCP is too vague as it stands. It does not specify the number of recurrences of relative coincidences that implies causality. It must require a "reasonable" number—say *n* recurrences—of conjunctions between *A* and *B* for the link between them not to be coincidental. So NCP becomes:

> NCP: If a conjunction is repeated *n* times or more, then that conjunction is not a relative coincidence.

Ṣadr admits that some such principle might be true; but disagrees with the Aristotelian claim that it is an a priori rational principle. But that means that NCP will have to be established by induction, and therefore cannot be used to justify induction. So it is essential for the Aristotelian account to show that NCP is a rational a priori principle (42–43).

But, Ṣadr says, Aristotelian logic does not present any justification for NCP. Instead, it assumes that, since it is a rational a priori principle, then like other such principles it does not stand in need of justification. Aristotelian logic, he says, divides rational knowledge into primary and secondary. Primary rational knowledge is intuitively present in the human mind (such as knowledge of the law of noncontradiction); while secondary rational knowledge is derived from the primary sort (such as the claim that the sum of the internal angles of a triangle is 180 degrees). And primary knowledge cannot be proven, because it cannot be deduced from anything.[10] Knowledge of NCP is of the primary sort.

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[10] Again, this seems an oversimplification of Aristotle's dialectical defense of first principles.

But, Ṣadr maintains, it is not clear that NCP is of this sort. If we compare it with the law of noncontradiction, we shall see that it is different in nature; for we cannot even imagine a contradiction, while we can easily imagine a world in which relative coincidences recur frequently (44–45).

But the fact that a world in which NCP holds is imaginable does not show that the principle is not a priori. For the same can be said of PSR and of PNNC: One can equally imagine a world in which things happen without being caused, and in which *A* can cause *B* on one occasion but fail to do so on an exactly similar occasion. If so, neither of these two principles would be a rational a priori principle, in which case it is difficult to see why Ṣadr allows Aristotelian logic to help itself to these principles, but not to NCP.

Ṣadr, however, proceeds to provide other arguments—seven in total—against the a priori status of NCP, and it is to some of these that we shall now turn. But before doing so, he draws some distinctions and introduces some definitions that are essential for his argument and that he puts to use later on in his book. In particular, his conception of "indefinite negative knowledge" plays a crucial role in his discussion.

28.2.2. Why NCP Is Not a Rational A Priori Principle

Suppose, he says, we specify the number *n* in NCP to stand at 10. Then NCP becomes:

> NCP: If a conjunction recurs 10 times or more, then that conjunction is not a relative coincidence.

According to the Aristotelian account, we know this principle a priori. But if we do, then we must also know a priori its contrapositive form:

> NCP: If a conjunction is a relative coincidence, then it does not recur 10 times or more.

In other words, if the conjunction between *A* and *B* is coincidental, then given any 10 occasions in which *A* occurs, it must be the case in at least one of these occasions that *A* is not followed by *B*. But of course NCP does not specify which of the 10 occasions is one in which this happens.

Ṣadr says this is a case of *indefinite negative knowledge*. It is like knowing of any piece of paper that the following is true: Either it is not black all over or it is not white all over, even if we do not know the paper's color. It is also like having the vague knowledge that at least one book is missing from a library shelf but without knowing which book that is.

Now, presumably, the a priori knowledge we have in the color case stems from the given incompatibility between the two colors—an incompatibility that perhaps stems from the nature of color. And in the bookshelf case, the vague a priori knowledge we have stems from the incompatibility between a book missing from a shelf without any books missing from the shelf—an incompatibility that seems logical in nature.

But where does the incompatibility between coincidental conjunction and recurrence stem from? It is the nature of this alleged a priori incompatibility that Ṣadr finds inexplicable. He raises seven objections in total against this claim of incompatibility, arguing that it is neither like the color case nor like the case of the missing book. If these objections work, NCP will seem to have unacceptable consequences, and the claim of an a priori incompatibility between coincidental conjunction and recurrence will seem untenable. I shall mention only three of his objections. The first I shall consider seems to appeal to the analogy with the case of incompatible colors; the second appeals to the missing book case; and the third does not seem to fit either.

First Objection. Suppose we test whether a particular drink causes headaches, and we administer the drink to a number of subjects. According to NCP, if there is no causal drink/headache link, then at most we can get nine cases of such a link in our experiment.

But now an unacceptable conclusion follows. Suppose we are *given* that the drink/headache relationship is merely coincidental. We can rig our experiment in such a manner as to show that, according to NCP, that link is not coincidental. We deliberately choose ten experiment subjects that are prone to having headaches anyway, whether or not they have the drink in question. The ten subjects are then given the drink. As a result, we will have ten cases in which the drink/headache conjunction holds. So, according to the NCP, this is not a case of coincidence; the drink must have caused the headaches, even though we know that it did not.

In response to the objection that the experiment's subjects were deliberately chosen to have an independent propensity to develop headaches, Ṣadr changes the example slightly by focusing on the link between being selected for the experiment and developing a headache. Suppose the experimenter randomly chooses a number of subjects to whom he administers the drink. Suppose, further, that of these subjects, so far nine who took the drink ended up with headaches. Then NCP says that, *given* that the selection/headache link is coincidental, it would be impossible for the experimenter to happen to select as his tenth subject someone who was going to have a headache anyway whether or not he had the drink—as if such subjects will simply flee the experimenter merely to ensure that NCP holds. But that seems incredible.

Third Objection: Indefinite knowledge based on vagueness (the bookshelf case) is always linked to a specific fact that is vaguely and indefinitely referred to. Moreover, any doubts raised regarding that fact would be a reason for the disappearance of that indefinite knowledge. For example, if we are told by a truthful person that Said has died, but we did not catch the name of the dead person, we then have indefinite knowledge that someone has died that is objectively linked to the specific claim that Said died. But, if we have independent reason to doubt Said's death, we cannot be said to have acquired the indefinite knowledge that someone had died.

This, however, is not what happens in the case of NCP and recurrent conjunctions. *Given* that a conjunction between *A* and *B* is coincidental, we know that in at least one of ten occasions in which *A* occurs it will not be followed by *B*. But knowing this is not based on any specific but vague knowledge regarding a specific occasion in which *A* occurs without being followed by *B*. Nor is it the case that there is any specific occasion of the ten such that, if we have independent reason to doubt that *A* occurs in it without being followed by *B*, our indefinite negative knowledge would disappear.

It therefore follows that our knowledge of NCP is not based on vague knowledge of some specific occasion in which there is failure of conjunction between *A* and *B*.

Fifth Objection: Not all of Ṣadr's objections against the a priori nature of NCP are of this sort. For example, the Fifth Objection argues that the view that NCP is known a priori cannot do justice to how additional evidence can affect a claim that a conjunction is non-coincidental. If NCP were a priori, then knowing that an *A*/*B* link has recurred ten times is sufficient to know that the link is causal. But we also know that if we have independent evidence that in one of these ten occasions the occurrence of *B* was due to some other *C*, we would review the claim that *A*/*B* link was a cause. So NCP is sensitive to experimental evidence in a manner that a priori principles are not.

Not all of Ṣadr's objections to the a priori nature of NCP are plausible; but there is no room for considering their strengths and weaknesses here. But, having argued that NCP is not a priori, he later argues that it can be shown to be highly probable. Presumably, that should mean that it is established on the basis of inductive evidence and therefore cannot be used in a noncircular way to justify induction.

28.3. SADR ON EMPIRICIST ACCOUNTS OF INDUCTION

Ṣadr now moves to discuss empiricist accounts of the justification of induction. The three main principles that Aristotelian logic focused on in justifying induction were the following:

1. PSR.
2. C/C.
3. PNNC.

Aristotelian logic assumes that PSR and PNNC are rational a priori principles, but argues that C/C can be justified by reference to another rational a priori principle, which we have referred to above as NCP. Empiricism, however, rejects the very idea of rational a priori principles known independently of any experience. For this reason, it focuses on the first and third principle above, paying only limited attention to the second.

According to Ṣadr, the main difference between the empiricist and the rationalist conceptions of causation is this: For the rationalist, to say that *A* causes *B* is to say that

A's occurrence *necessitates B*'s occurrence. For the empiricist, to say that *A* causes *B* is to say that *A will always be temporally succeeded* by *B* (in the right circumstances, of course), without making use of the notion of necessity since necessary connection is not something we experience.

Ṣadr classifies the empiricist approach to these principles under three main headings, depending on the extent to which each trusts inductive reasoning. The first approach argues that it is possible to reach certainty via inductive reasoning; the second approach holds that inductive reasoning makes its conclusions more or less probable, though not certain; and the third approach casts doubt on the objective value of inductive reasoning and explains its appeal by arguing that it stems from a mere mental "custom and habit." Most of what he has to say concerns the third approach.

The first and second approaches agree with the Aristotelians that inductive reasoning depends on PSR and PNNC. But while the first approach argues in a circular manner that these principles themselves are established by induction, the second approach argues that they cannot be established at all, and that inductive reasoning ultimately cannot lead to certainty.[11] It is on the third approach, associated with David Hume, that Ṣadr focuses, and it is this that I shall discuss at more length here.

This third, so-called *psychological* approach strips inductive reasoning of any objective validity. Far from establishing the truth or probability of a generalization, induction merely habituates the mind into accepting that generalization as true. According to Hume, past constant conjunctions cannot justify induction unless we assume that the future will resemble the past—the *Principle of Uniformity of Nature* (PUN). But what justifies PUN? Nothing, according to Hume; all there is is a psychological tendency to believe in PUN. And this can be discovered by an extensive analysis of the cause/effect relationship that is the basis of our reasoning regarding matters of fact, of which induction is the main variety. Ṣadr therefore needs to go into the details of Hume's analysis of the idea of the cause/effect relationship.

He starts by noting that Hume classifies our perceptions into impressions (sensations and emotions) and ideas (memories, concepts, thoughts). The two are distinguished from each other by their degree of vivacity and force, with impressions being the more vivid and forceful, and ideas being less so. Furthermore, all perceptions are either simple or complex, the latter compounded from simple perceptions. Moreover, every simple idea must be a copy of a simple impression; this is usually referred to as the *Copy Principle* (CP) and is seen as definitive of Hume's empiricism. Finally, we can in our imagination put simple ideas together to form complex ideas to which no complex impressions need correspond.

So much for the origins of our ideas; but our ideas are also regularly associated with each other by principles of association of ideas: resemblance, spatiotemporal contiguity, and cause and effect, the most important of which is the cause/effect relationship. And if we ask how the idea of this relationship arose in our minds, we shall have to trace it back to the impressions from which it was ultimately derived; but to do so, we must first understand what is involved in the idea of this relationship.

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[11] The second approach ultimately rests on a verificationist theory of meaning that Ṣadr argues against in the third part of his book.

The important thing is that the idea of a cause/effect relationship between *A* and *B* cannot be reduced to the mere spatiotemporal contiguity of the two; it also involves the idea of necessity or inevitability. We shall therefore have to seek the simple impressions from which that idea was derived. To do so, we shall have to examine our experience when we get this idea to see what in it gives rise to the idea.

The problem, according to Hume, is that we cannot get the idea of necessary connection between *A* and *B* from any impressions of *A* conjoined with *B*, simply because necessary connection is not something we sense when we sense a conjunction. What happens is that after a conjunction of *A* and *B* is repeated a few times, the mind is carried by a habit to move from the appearance of *A* to expect its usual attendant *B* and to believe that *B* will exist. It is this *strong feeling of determination* that is the impression from which our idea of necessary connection is derived.

In other words, our idea of necessary connection is derived from an impression that is itself no more than a strong feeling resulting from a recurrent conjunction. And this impression is an impression of *inner* sense, not of outer objects. But the mind has a habit of projecting (or, as Hume would say, "spreading") this idea derived from an impression of inner sense onto the external world.

Given this analysis of the origin of the idea of necessary connection, it follows that at the heart of inductive reasoning lies, not rational proof, but mental habits. It turns out that all inductive arguments regarding matters of fact are based on a subjective and not an objective basis because they are all based on the cause/effect relationship as shown above.

But being exposed to a constant conjunction of *A's* and *B's* not only gives rise to the idea of *B* in the mind of someone who perceives *A*; it will also give rise to the *belief* that *B* will occur when *A* occurs. So Hume needs to explain what distinguishes a belief from a mere idea. It turns out that belief is just a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression. The main difference between a belief and a thought that shares the same content is that a belief is an idea that gained from an impression a greater degree of vividness than the mere thought did.

Ṣadr rightly objects to this theory. If the endorsement of an idea involved in belief is a matter of the idea's vividness, it should follow that impressions are the strongest beliefs. But, then, this should rule out the possibility of having a belief that runs counter to our impressions. However, we sometimes have impressions in whose content we do not believe, as when we see a pencil immersed in a glass of water as crooked but believe it to be straight.

On the basis of this and similar arguments, Ṣadr concludes that "for an idea to be a belief, it need not be a copy of an impression" (101). His alternative account of belief is that belief is a sort of mental action which is a "judgment by the mind endorsing the content of the thought"; in short, a belief is a thought judged to be true (99)—or, to use modern philosophical jargon, belief is a propositional attitude. This account will prove important in developing Ṣadr's theory in later sections.

Ṣadr now moves to criticizing Hume's account. Before doing so, it is worth noting that, although Hume argues that we have no reason to project the idea of necessary connection—and hence of causation—onto the external world, we do have such an idea. This means that this idea makes sense and it is *possible* that there is an objective causal nexus in the external world. On the basis of this possibility and the observation of constant conjunctions in experience, Ṣadr says that he will later on argue that this possibility is in fact actualized.

Ṣadr's criticisms of Hume's account are systematically presented, but it seems to me they are sometimes jumbled, and I shall separate them from each other and focus on the most important:

1. Hume's account is incoherent. His rejection of induction is based on the Copy Principle (CP), but he presents CP as an empirical hypothesis itself based on induction. So if induction lacks any objective justification, then CP lacks objective justification, and it should follow that Hume's own explanation of the origins of the idea of necessary connection (hence causation) itself also lacks any objective justification.
2. Hume's account of belief in causality in terms of mental habits assumes PUN. Habit is a regular pattern of behavior that stretches into the future. Accordingly, when we attribute a habit to someone, we are claiming that his or her behavior manifests a regularity that will stretch into the future. That attribution rests on an assumption concerning the uniformity of nature—in effect PUN.
3. Hume seems to argue that the only explanation of why we are willing to argue inductively on the basis of a thousand instances but not on the basis of a single instance is because the former, but not the latter, give rise to mental habits. But, argues Ṣadr, there is another explanation: A single instance does not rule out the possibility of coincidence, while a thousand instances reduce the probability of such coincidence. Recurrence is relevant because it *objectively* decreases the chance of a relative coincidence, not because it creates a *psychological* habit.
4. Hume's account of our belief in a causal link in terms of a mental habit is unable to account for the fact that such belief simply disappears when we discover that observed past constant conjunctions were merely coincidental. It is not clear why a mental habit formed as a result of observing a recurrent conjunction should simply disappear when we find out that the recurrence was merely coincidental.
5. While Hume may be able to account for probability based on past recurrent conjunctions by reference to habit formation, he is unable to account for what Ṣadr describes as "logical probabilities." If I have sufficient evidence to believe that X, Y, and Z were the only people on board of a plane that crashed, and that only one of them died, then the chance that it was X who died will be 1/3, and the chance that it is either X or Y who died will be 2/3. This belief is not based on observed past recurrent conjunctions; it is logical and rational. The belief must be derived from something other than habit.

On the basis of the above, Ṣadr concludes that the empiricist approach is unable to account for induction, thus paving the way to his own account, which takes up most of the book.

28.4. ṢADR'S ACCOUNT OF INDUCTION: "SUBJECTIVISM"

Having rejected the "rationalist" (Aristotelian) and the empiricist ways of dealing with the problem of induction, Ṣadr proceeds to introduce what he describes as "a new direction in epistemology," his so-called subjectivist doctrine. This doctrine agrees with the rationalists that our knowledge ultimately rests on a priori bases; but it disagrees with the rationalists regarding which part of our knowledge is a priori and regarding the possible ways in which our knowledge can grow.

The latter difference from the rationalists depends upon Ṣadr's analysis of knowledge that distinguishes between propositional attitudes and the contents or propositions toward which these attitudes are directed. When I know that the sun is shining, there is my knowing (the propositional attitude), and there is what is known (that the sun is shining). The former is what Ṣadr refers to as the "subjective" element or dimension of knowledge, and the latter is the "objective" element or dimension.

Given these two dimensions, Ṣadr says, knowledge can grow along two axes, depending on which dimension is involved:

> It can grow "objectively" by exploiting relations among the objects of knowledge—the contents or propositions known. For example, given my knowledge that all men are mortal and that Khaled is a man, I can come to know that Khaled is mortal. The necessary connections between two known initial contents give rise to new knowledge.
>
> But knowledge can also grow along the "subjective" dimension. Here, Ṣadr says, the growth stems from "the connection between the two knowings" (125) rather than that between the *contents* of the knowings.

According to Ṣadr, Aristotelian logic is committed to three apparently inconsistent claims:

(1) Knowledge can grow only objectively.
(2) This can happen only via deduction.
(3) Induction can make knowledge grow.

It tries to resolve the inconsistency by focusing on (3) and saying that induction is really deduction based on an a priori principle—NCP—without which the instances mentioned in the premises will be insufficient to justify the generalized conclusion.

By contrast, Ṣadr escapes the inconsistency by focusing on (1) and arguing that knowledge can grow from other knowledge by "subjective" means (126–27). Although this last sort of knowledge growth cannot be accounted for by the ordinary formal deductive logic, this does not mean that anything goes. In other words, there are restrictions and rules that determine how knowledge can grow subjectively from one state to another. It is clear that ordinary formal logic is unable to provide these restrictions and rules. We thus need a new sort of logic—a "subjective logic that uncovers the conditions that render subjective growth of knowledge rational" (130).

Knowledge growth by subjective means passes through two phases:

a. The phase of objective growth, in which knowledge starts as a probability, which continuously grows by objective means, reaching a very high level of probability but without reaching the level of certainty.
b. The phase of subjective growth, which achieves the last raising of that high probability to the level of certainty.

All successful inductive generalizations pass through these two phases. At first, inductive reasoning uses rational—albeit new—deductive methods and increases the degree of probability of an inductive generalization on objective grounds; and in the second phase, inductive reasoning abandons the deductive ways and subjectively raises knowledge to the level of certainty.

Ṣadr's discussion thus falls into two parts—a part that explains inductive reasoning in its objective phase, and a part that explains it in its subjective phase.

28.4.1. The Objective Phase of Induction

The objective dimension of inductive reasoning rests on the theory of probability. In this phase, we establish the objective probability of a conclusion given certain premises. This is done by relying on the probability calculus, a version of which Ṣadr proceeds to sketch.

His account makes use of the notion of "indefinite knowledge" that he had earlier presented in discussing the Aristotelian account of induction. A person has indefinite knowledge when he knows that a range of alternatives holds, but does not know which members of the range actually hold (175–76).

The idea, roughly, is this: If I know that at least one of two friends, *A* and *B*, will visit me, that is a case of indefinite knowledge where the alternatives can be reduced to a set of mutually exclusive alternatives. For when I know that either *A* or *B* will visit me, I know that one of the following three mutually exclusive alternatives will hold:

1. Only *A* will visit me.
2. Only *B* will visit me.
3. Both *A* and *B* will visit me.

Each one of these three mutually exclusive cases is said to be an “alternative” in the knowledge.

Moreover, the following is true of every instance of indefinite knowledge:

(1) Each involves a specific degree of certainty regarding something indefinite.
(2) Each involves a set of mutually exclusive alternatives each of whose members is a possible case that could hold.
(3) Each involves a set of probabilities equal in number to the set of alternatives, with each member of the set of alternatives matched by a member of the set of probabilities (176–77).

A probability value can now be defined as follows: It is a member of the set (3) of probabilities involved in a case of indefinite knowledge; and its value always equals the result of dividing the figure standing for the degree of certainty of the indefinite knowledge (mentioned in (1) above) by the number of alternatives (mentioned in (2) above) involved in that indefinite knowledge (177). So, in the above example, assuming that the degree of certainty of my indefinite knowledge is n, the probability of only A visiting me will be $n/3$. (It is understood that $1 \leq n \leq 1$.)

After criticizing the traditional interpretations of probability,[12] Ṣadr shows that his account of probability fits neatly into the probability calculus. His interpretation seems to treat probability as the measure of the degree to which a proposition should be believed. More interestingly for our purpose, he moves on to show how this notion of probability can be used in experiments to increase the probability that a phenomenon *A* is the cause of another phenomenon *B*, and hence increase the probability that *A* will always be followed by *B* (in similar circumstances of course). Moreover, he argues that induction can increase the probability of a generalization without making any additional assumptions regarding inductive reasoning. In other words,

> Induction is but an application of probability theory with its definitions and axioms that we have presented, and we can use it to prove an inductive generalization to a high degree of probability. (228)

To show this, Ṣadr proposes four “applications” of his probability theory, all of which consider whether we can use that theory to increase the probability that a particular event *A* is the cause of another event *B*. The discussion depends on the difference between the rationalist and empiricist understandings of causality.

As noted earlier, on the rationalist understanding, a cause necessitates its effect because the cause includes the effect in it (230–31), while on the empiricist understanding a causal relationship is just a relationship of constant and repeated conjunction with no necessity involved. Let us call the former “rational causality” and the latter “empiricist causality." Ṣadr argues that repeated experiments can increase the probability of a causal relationship provided we operate with a rationalist conception of causality.

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[12] Not very convincingly; but there is no room to get into that here.

The first three applications assume that there are no a priori reasons against rational causality. The fourth application rejects this assumption and only allows empiricist causality. Moreover, the first three differ from each other regarding the possibility of absolute coincidences—in short, regarding PSR.[13] The real challenge to Ṣadr's account comes with the fourth application, where it is assumed that there are a priori reasons for the claim that the only notion of causality that is permissible is the empiricist notion, implying that every conjunction of *A* and *B* is a relative coincidence—in short, the Humean position.

Here Ṣadr admits that we cannot establish the probability of a causal relationship regardless of the number of experiments we carry out. His response is to argue that the burden of proof is on someone who claims that we have a priori reasons for rejecting the rationalist understanding of causality as involving necessary connection. He considers some of the arguments offered to justify that claim—a "logical positivist" justification; a "philosophical (Humean)" justification; a "scientific" justification based on indeterminacy at the subatomic level; and the "practical" justification that it makes more sense to rely on statistical generalizations than on causal claims—but finds them all wanting. But, again, there is no room to get into his arguments here.

The upshot of the above argument is that, operating with a notion of rational as opposed to empiricist causality, induction can objectively increase the probability of a claim of the form "A causes B"—the degree to which that claim should be believed.

28.4.2. The Subjective Phase of Induction

So far, Ṣadr's account still falls squarely within the traditional debate regarding induction. It is when he comes to the subjective phase of induction that he offers the leap to certainty that will bridge the "gap" he pointed to in inductive arguments at the beginning of his book. Given this, it is somewhat disappointing to see the main assumption that provides the springboard for the leap is somewhat makeshift and unsteady. It is discussed at length; but it will probably seem a bit of a letdown to anyone expecting an advance over the traditional debates. At least this is how it strikes me, assuming I have understood Ṣadr properly.

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[13] The first application assumes that there are a priori reasons for upholding PSR; the second is noncommittal regarding PSR's truth; and the third goes further and assumes there are a priori reasons for believing that PSR may possibly be false. In the first application where we assume PSR, we show how to increase the probability that a phenomenon *A* is the cause of another phenomenon *B*—in effect show that NCP is highly probable. But in the second and third applications, given the rationalist understanding of causality, the probability calculus makes it highly probable that PSR is in fact true; we can then use the same methods as in the first application to increase the probability that *A* causes *B*. The details are rather complicated, and there is no room here to go into them.

Inductive reasoning has been shown to be a variety of probabilistic deductive reasoning, provided we make certain assumptions (regarding the absence of any a priori arguments against the rationalist conception of causality). But there is a difference between the deductive character of inductive reasoning at the probabilistic phase and the deductive character of purely deductive reasoning—as when we conclude that the sum of the internal angles of a triangle is 180 degrees.

The difference is this: Purely deductive reasoning proves the truth of an objective content—a proposition. Inductive reasoning in its deductive phase does not prove the truth of the objective content of a causal claim or an inductive generalization; it only increases by deductive means the degree of belief in that content. The basic question is this: Can this inductively generated degree of belief transform into certainty at a later phase of inductive reasoning? This is where the "leap" I mention above is supposed to be effected.

To lay the ground for answering this question, Ṣadr draws a distinction between three sorts of certainty:

1. *Logical certainty*: This is the certainty with which we believe something when we know that it is impossible for it to be otherwise given other knowledge we have—for example, when we know that, given p and q, it is logically impossible for not-p to be true.
2. *Subjective certainty*: This is the conviction beyond any doubt that someone has that a proposition is true. It is a psychological state relative to each person's circumstances and has nothing to do with logical impossibility or with the evidence the person has.
3. *Objective certainty*: This is certainty that matches the probability of the content of one's belief as established by the theory of probability. It is this sort of certainty that Ṣadr has in mind when considering whether the degree of belief in an inductively generated conclusion can be raised to the level of absolute certainty. The important point regarding this notion of certainty is that the appropriateness of the degree to which something is believed is an objective matter, determined by the probability of that thing in light of the available evidence.

Now, just as the logical certainty of a mathematical theorem derives from the logical certainty of other theorems from which it is derived, so the degree of objective certainty of a belief is derived from the objective certainty of prior beliefs held. And, just as in the mathematical case, the logical certainty of a theorem must ultimately stem from the certainty of axioms whose certainty is immediately obvious and given, the degree of objective certainty of a belief must ultimately stem from the degree of objective certainty of other beliefs whose degree of certainty is immediately given. In other words, there must be beliefs whose degree of objective certainty is immediately given and which ultimately provide the foundations for the allocation of degrees of certainty to various inductively generated beliefs (326–27).

This seems a reflection of the fact that we can calculate the probability of specific outcomes provided that the probability of other outcomes is immediately given—in other words, that the probability calculus has to start with basic probability distributions that are themselves not calculated on the basis of other probabilities. Thus, given the allegedly obvious and objective certainty that a coin can fall on exactly one of its two sides, we can calculate that the objective degree of certainty appropriate to the belief that we will get heads when we flip the coin is ½. The latter value is deduced from the degree of certainty of the belief that a coin can land on exactly one of its two sides. This latter degree of certainty is not deduced from anything else, but is immediately given.

Of course, beliefs whose degree of objective certainty is immediately given should be distinguished from beliefs that just seem certain to particular individuals. The certainty in the latter case is just subjective certainty, a psychological phenomenon not achieved by rational means on the basis of the evidence. By contrast, the certainty or degree of belief in the former case is objective and answers to the real probability distributions in the world as they present themselves to the subject.

If we stick to the deductive phase of induction—the theory of probability—we would not be able to conclude that the degree of objective certainty of a belief that is derived in this phase can reach the level of absolute certainty. Probability theory can only establish the probable truth of (the degree of belief in) certain claims given the probable truth of others; it does not render the former certain. Therefore, the only way in which the degree of objective certainty of some inductively generated beliefs can reach the level of absolute certainty is if that certainty appears as something immediately given.

To do so, an assumption is needed that transforms an inductively reached conclusion that is only highly probable into an absolutely certain belief whose certainty is immediately given:

> *Assumption*: Whenever the probability value of an alternative becomes overwhelmingly great, that value transforms—under specific conditions—into certainty.

It is as if "human knowledge is designed in a manner that prevents it from preserving very small probability values; any small probability value simply dies away in favor of the large probability value on the other side; and this means: this [large probability] value transforms into certainty" (333).

As presented, this seems like a description of what is supposed to *actually* happen in the mind when a highly probable alternative collides with alternatives with very small probabilities. It does not tell us what *should* happen—what is *required by rationality*. It is a descriptive assumption concerning how "human knowledge" actually develops; it is not prescriptive, telling us what the rules of rationality require a rational subject to do.

In this respect, it seems similar to Hume's talk of custom and habit: When faced with alternatives, one of which is calculated to have a large probability, human knowing subjects cannot but abandon the smaller probabilities in favor of the larger one, which then transforms into absolute certainty. But why is this certainty not subjective in the psychological sense that Ṣadr has distinguished? Is there something more rational in compliance with that Assumption than in its violation? And had human knowledge not been so "designed," would induction no longer yield absolute certainties?

In fact, Ṣadr even admits that people disagree in their subjective certainty regarding the magnitude of the small probability value that will "disappear" when the probability of one alternative increases to enormous levels, transforming that alternative to an absolute certainty. He says:

> One degree of accumulation of probability value at one focal point may lead the large probability value resulting from that accumulation to transform into absolute certainty in one individual and to the disappearance of conflicting probability values for him, while these same consequences may not occur with another individual unless the degree of accumulation of probability values at one focal point reaches a higher level. (334–35)

And he adds that the Assumption needed by inductive reasoning need not specify the degree of probability that leads to certainty; all it needs is the principle that there is such a degree in the "inductions which are agreed to be successful" (335).

Although the quotation above is about subjective certainty, it occurs in response to a question concerning how small a probability value must be for it to "disappear" when confronted with a highly probable alternative. Ṣadr seems to be suggesting that this degree varies from person to person depending on each person's idiosyncrasies. If not outright subjective certainty of the variety dismissed as merely psychological by Ṣadr, the objective certainty based on this Assumption seems of the same nature. Unlike subjective certainty, objective certainty may be answerable to the objective degrees of probability; but that in itself does not tell us why it would be rational to leap to absolute certainty regarding the conclusions of certain inductive arguments.

Nor is the talk of "inductions which are agreed to be successful" of much help here. For what are these inductions supposed to be? Presumably, they are inductions that make their conclusions highly probable, and are generally accepted as such. Even if we assume that, in their case, there is a fixed degree that, once achieved, turns into certainty and which does not vary from person to person, that does not explain why the leap to certainty even in their case is rationally justifiable instead of being merely de facto.

Furthermore, Ṣadr says that the Assumption cannot be proven. In this respect, it is similar to the principle of noncontradiction in deductive logic. But this hardly responds to the worries expressed above. We do not hold that human beings just *happen* to abide by the principle of noncontradiction and that is that; we believe it rational for them to do so.

Nor can we make easy sense of the claim that, had human knowledge been designed differently, it would not have abided by the principle of noncontradiction. But we can make easy sense of the denial of the Assumption; in fact, "the problem of induction" can in one sense be seen as the challenge to show that the transformation of probabilities into absolute certainty mentioned in the Assumption is justified.

The subsequent conditions that Ṣadr places on the Assumption do not undermine the above criticism, which—to me at least—seems fatal to his overall project of "justifying induction." They are meant to avoid some undesirable consequences of the Assumption as formulated.[14] But they do not address the worry I express above.

It may be that what Ṣadr has in mind here has to do with his talk of beliefs whose degree of objective certainty is immediately given and which ultimately provide the foundations for the allocation of degrees of certainty to various inductively generated beliefs. That is, it may be that Ṣadr's Assumption is just the claim that there are beliefs whose objective certainty is immediately given as absolute, simply because they have crossed a certain probability threshold. Just as it is immediately given that the probability of a flipped coin turning out heads is ½, so it is immediately given that the certainty of a belief that has crossed a certain probability threshold is absolute.

This is hardly adequate, however. Ṣadr is supposed to be trying to solve "the problem of induction"—the problem that Hume had grappled with. That is a problem concerning our *right* to certainty regarding inductively derived conclusions; it is not a request for a description of how we *actually* react to a belief that has crossed a certain probability threshold.

28.5. APPLICATION OF SADR'S ACCOUNT

After presenting a version of the Aristotelian system revised in light of his own views on induction, Ṣadr moves on to present his proof of the existence of God—or, at least, of a rational creator of the universe—on inductive grounds.

28.5.1. Inductive Proof of God's Existence

The proof begins by arguing that it can be shown that it is more probable that a meaningful text was authored by a rational author than by an irrational one. For example, suppose a word *W* occurs one hundred times in a text, all in appropriate meaningful positions. The question is: What are the chances that the text's author, responsible for each and every one of these occurrences of *W*, is rational? Using his version of the probability calculus, Ṣadr calculates that the chances of the former are much more than the latter.

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[14] For example, if we know that exactly one book in a library of 100,000 books has pages missing, then there is a 0.00001 percent chance that any book we pick at random will be that book. It will also be the case that there is a 99.999 percent chance that that book is not the book with missing pages. Does this destroy the possibility that it is the book in question? If we say it does, since the book was picked at random, then regarding any book we pick up, that book will certainly not be the book in question. This destroys the given knowledge that there is such a book in the library. The restrictions are supposed to address such objections to the Assumption.

The next question is: What are the chances that an orderly set of phenomena in the world is the result of a rational author? There are four possible responses here:

(1) The phenomena are the work of a rational being.
(2) The phenomena are absolute coincidences.
(3) The phenomena are the work of an irrational being that acts unconsciously and without aim.
(4) The phenomena are the result of causal relations in which there are no conscious aims.

Although the details of the proof are complicated and I am not sure I can follow them all, the basic idea is clear: We can show by a complex version of the reasoning employed in the case of *W* that the probability of (1) is much greater than that of all other alternatives. In fact, the more the number of orderly phenomena we consider, the greater the probability of (1). Presumably, when we come to realize that the whole universe is an orderly cosmos, the probability of (1) reaches a level at which the Assumption kicks in and we move to the absolute certainty of (1).

The upshot is that the certainty that the world is the work of a rational being is based on the same principles that lead to certainty in the natural sciences. Either we accept both certainties—the certainty of the existence of a rational maker of the world and the certainty of our most certain scientific theories—or we reject both. The conclusion, obviously, is that we should accept both. Of course, however, it is not clear how we justify the leap from this "rational creator" to the God of religion and, specifically, Islam.[15]

28.6. CONCLUSION

Ṣadr's project was ambitious on a grand scale. Had it succeeded, it would have been a major achievement; but the prospects for its success in achieving its main aims were slim to begin with given the scale of these aims—nothing short of solving "the problem of induction" and, in the process, establishing induction as the source of almost all of our knowledge, scientific and otherwise, and proving the existence of God on "scientific" bases. The project, however, ultimately rests on an Assumption that seems to promise more than it can deliver. Still, in the process of getting to his final destination,

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[15] Ṣadr seems to go to extremes later in the claims he makes for induction. For example, he argues—in my view fallaciously—that the reliability of our sensory experience can be established on the basis of induction. The "proof" seems to rest on the strange notion of an experience being present without being experienced, and equivocates on the meaning of "objective experience," oscillating between "an experience that represents the world objectively" and "an experience that exists objectively." He also argues that all categories of primary knowledge are known by induction, with the exception of the principle of noncontradiction and any assumptions needed for inductive reasoning, including the axioms of the probability calculus.

Ṣadr faced head-on very difficult issues in contemporary Western philosophy, coming up with original suggestions and pursuing them to their logical conclusion with relentless determination and intellectual honesty. The result is a work that highlights the common roots and methods shared between the Islamic tradition in philosophy and logic and the concerns of modern analytic philosophy.

Still, it is remarkable that there is nothing particularly *Islamic* about Ṣadr's approach and the content of what he writes in his treatise. It may as well have been written by a Christian philosopher concerned to defend religious faith against the perceived threat of scientific modes of reasoning by developing an entire epistemology based on an analysis of inductive reasoning.[16]

Given this, I am not sure one can cite Ṣadr to argue for the survival of a vibrant *Islamic* tradition in philosophy. His concerns—in *this* treatise, it must be stressed—are those of contemporary *Western* philosophy, though the motivations may have been Islamic in nature. But, then again, the division between "Islamic" and "Western" philosophy may be artificial to begin with, given the two traditions' common roots and concerns, their overlapping and crisscrossing histories, and their similar methods and tools.

It is perhaps in the latter domain that a distinction between the two traditions is clearest, given the enormous advances in formal logic and the great richness of the debate on philosophical logic in the past century or so in the West—debates that are not alien to the concerns of the Islamic tradition. Perhaps it is also in this domain that Ṣadr's achievement is most impressive—namely, in its success (in passing and as a side effect) in infusing into the philosophical debate in the Islamic tradition some of the modern formal tools and logical devices invented in the West, doing so in the very attempt to resist what he perceived as the threats inherent in the Western outlook.

There is an irony inherent in this outcome: Ṣadr apparently felt he could not refuse to confront the West's cultural hegemony on its own terms since to do otherwise would give the West an uncontested hold over the hearts and minds of Muslims; yet, in the very process of pursuing his project, Ṣadr is forced to use the very tools invented by the West. But that seems a paradox that manifests itself at various practical and theoretical levels that go beyond merely "academic" philosophy.

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[16] One striking feature about this treatise is the dearth of citations from the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*—ordinarily so rife in works by Islamic thinkers.

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CHAPTER 29

ʿALLĀMA ṬABĀṬABĀʾĪ (D. 1981), *NIHĀYAT AL-ḤIKMA*

SAJJAD H. RIZVI AND AHAB BDAIWI

FOR at least a generation, the academic study of Islamic philosophy has recognized the continuity of the tradition beyond the medieval period and even the survival of inquiry into the works of Avicenna, Mullā Ṣadrā, and Neoplatonic classics such as the *Theologia Aristotelis* into the present, especially in the Shīʿī seminaries of Iran and Iraq (Mottahedeh 1986, 134–56, 175–85, 242–43). In this chapter, we discuss the thought of the Iranian Shīʿī philosopher and exegete Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1981), arguably the most important and influential of the twentieth century, for his efforts in establishing the study of philosophy at the heart of the Shīʿī seminary curriculum. He considered philosophy to be the essential toolkit for the informed believer in the modern world that would equip her for the intellectual challenges thrown up by the real threats to faith such as the denial of the reality of existence, of the existence of the immaterial, of different forms of dualism, of the possibility of knowledge, and of a foundationalist ethics entailing the affirmation of an afterlife. Through his works in philosophy and his voluminous exegesis of the Qurʾān, he sought to establish an age-old Shīʿī maxim of the perfect compatibility of reason and revelation (e.g., Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *ʿAlī*).

As we shall see, his philosophy was a product of the intellectual developments in Tehran and in Najaf. While the former has been indicated in a number of studies (e.g., Nasr 2006, 237–56), the latter is far less well known (but see al-Rifāʿī 2010, esp. 170–78, and Bdaiwi, forthcoming). However, we do know that Najaf was a center for the study of logic, philosophy, and philosophical theology going back at least to the Timurid period. At the end of the sixteenth century, two pivotal figures in the teaching of logic and philosophical theology were Mullā ʿAbdullāh Yazdī (d. 981/1573), who completed the marginalia (*ḥāshiya*) in Najaf in 967/1559-60 that are still studied in the seminary on the *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* of Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), and Aḥmad *al-muqaddas* Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585), who wrote useful marginalia on the *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd* of Qūshjī (d. 879/1474) (Āl Maḥbūba 1958, 3:385–86; Yazdī, *Ḥāshiya*; Ardabīlī, *Ḥāshiya*). A key figure at the end of the eighteenth century was Mahdī Narāqī (d. 1209/1795), who wrote extensively in Najaf on Avicenna, including a commentary on the *Metaphysics* of *al-Shifāʾ* that is highly critical of Mullā Ṣadrā (Narāqī, *Sharḥ*). By the nineteenth century the teaching of philosophy was closely intertwined with jurisprudence. Ṭabāṭabāʾī, in particular, benefited from the scholarship of those who brought together the study of philosophy, jurisprudence, and mysticism into a harmonious synthesis—this was a good example of "philosophy as a way of life" (Chase et al. 2013).

While there is a large (mostly hagiographical) literature on Ṭabāṭabāʾī in Persian on his life, mysticism, philosophy, and exegesis (e.g., Āmulī 2007), there is not much on him in European languages save an article here and there (e.g., Algar 2006) and some sections of works dedicated to contemporary Islamic intellectual history in Iran (e.g., Dabashi 1993, 273–323; Hajatpour 2002, 160–79). A study of his philosophy and an assessment of its significance remains to be written even while we now have all his works in print, including a number of posthumous publications and lecture notes of his students, including the prominent *Principles of Philosophy* penned by his student and leading revolutionary Murtażā Muṭahharī (d. 1979), only parts of which were published in his lifetime (Muṭahharī, *Uṣūl*). In his introduction, the student writes that the work is a record of a rather condensed course on philosophy that took in the whole history of comparative Islamic and European philosophy to suggest in the culmination what tools the student might find in the Islamic philosophical heritage, not least in the work of Mullā Ṣadrā, to equip him in making sense of the world and in being able to resist intellectual challenges from various forms of materialism and skepticism—hence it establishes the "principles of philosophy" and what he calls "realism" (Muṭahharī, *Uṣūl*, I, 18–19). As Muṭahharī put it, Islamic philosophy in Iran needed to enter a new phase, to address new audiences, not least the young educated classes, who were much enamored of European philosophy and attracted to dialectical materialism in particular (Muṭahharī, *Uṣūl*, I, 20–21).

One common summary of his contribution is to stipulate that Ṭabāṭabāʾī fundamentally affected four areas of inquiry: first, he reformulated a realist theory of epistemology to combat skepticism; second, he rehearsed the traditional ontological proof for the existence of God (*burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*) for the new theology of postwar Shīʿī intellectual history and showed how philosophy could contribute to a more intellectually rigorous theological response to modernity; third, he made a radical distinction between perception that relates to "real" objects of inquiry and those that are merely mentally posited or "beings of reason" without reference in extramental reality (*ḥaqīqī* vs. *iʿtibārī*) (cf. Āl Ṣafā 2001); and finally, he drew upon the Sadrian notion of motion in substance and the dynamic of the universe to connect traditional Islamic philosophy with new developments in cosmology (al-Rifāʿī 2010, 17).

29.1. ṬABĀṬABĀʾĪ: A PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī was born in Shādābād, a village near Tabriz in 1321/1904 into a sayyid family of prominent scholars, judges of Tabriz, and spiritual guides

(Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Zindagī*; Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭihrānī, *Mihr*, 11–136; Āmulī 2007; Dabashi 1993; Zavvāra 1996). His famous ancestor Sayyid ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 937/1524) was a major Sufi shaykh associated with the Naqshbandī order in the Timurid period and later enjoyed the patronage of Shah Ismail after the Safavid capture of Tabriz in 1501 (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nasabnāma*, 47, 60; Algar 2003, 9–13; Subḥānī 1982, 49). As his parents died when he was still very young, his uncle Sayyid Muḥammad ʿAlī took charge of him and his younger brother Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan (1909–1968, later known as Ilāhī and himself a spiritual master in Tabriz). Being an orphan is an important trope in his hagiography.

After his elementary studies in Tabriz learning Arabic and Persian language and literature, he moved in 1343/1925 to Najaf, where he studied for ten years with major jurists and *uṣūlīs*, including Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nāʾinī (d. 1355/1936), who was known for his constitutionalism and his strong support for clerical authority, and Sayyid Abū-l-Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (d. 1365/1946), the leading *marjaʿ* of the time. He was particularly attached to the philosophically minded jurist Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Gharavī Iṣfahānī Kumpānī (d. 1361/1942), and indeed later he edited and glossed a famous correspondence of seven letters between him and Sayyid Aḥmad Ṭihrānī Karbalāʾī (d. 1332/1914) on the nature of existence—a debate between a philosopher and a mystic (Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭihrānī 1989). Ṭabāṭabāʾī's juristic formation was complete and he was recognized in Najaf as a *mujtahid*.

Iṣfahānī had studied philosophy with Muḥammad Bāqir Iṣṭahbānātī, who had himself studied with three of the major figures of Tehran bringing together three intellectual traditions: ʿAlī Zunūzī (d. 1307/1890) representing the Sadrian, Muḥammad Riżā Qumshihī (d. 1306/1888) on *ʿirfān*, and Sayyid Abū-l-Ḥasan Jilva (d. 1314/1897) on the Avicennan.[1] He wrote an important work in philosophy, *Tuḥfat al-ḥakīm*, in verse and also a voluminous commentary on the classic of modern Shīʿī jurisprudence, *Kifāyat al-uṣūl* of Khurāsānī (d. 1911), that bears the imprint of philosophical reflection (Yazdī, *Taʿlīqāt*; Iṣfahānī, *Nihāya*). Iṣfahānī's *Tuḥfa* was modeled on the *Sharḥ-i manẓūma* of Sabzavārī, following its rough order, and the influence on Ṭabāṭabāʾī's latter textbooks is clear. Divided into four sections (*mabāḥith*) on ontology, properties of contingency, category theory, and theology, it begins with discussions on the nature of existence and its referents and culminates with the proof for the existence of God and his attributes (Yazdī, *Taʿlīqāt*, 59–112). In particular, his discussion of the intellectual mode of *iʿtibārāt* has a clear influence on Ṭabāṭabāʾī: Iṣfahānī explains Mullā Ṣadrā's distinction between modes of connective existence (*al-wujūd al-rābiṭ*) that pertain to extramental reality and the mentally posited copula (*al-wujūd al-rābiṭī*) that allows us to construct and make sense of propositions in mental existence by recourse to the distinction between the *ḥaqīqī*—what pertains to extramental reality—and the *iʿtibārī*—that pertain to mental existence (Yazdī, *Taʿlīqāt*, 69).

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[1] These figures have barely been studied, but a forthcoming volume on Qajar philosophy (to be published by Brill) edited by Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke covers their contribution. This assessment is helped by the fact that their works have been edited: Zunūzī *Majmūʿa*, Qumshihī *Majmūʿa*, Jilva *Majmūʿa*.

Even more significant for his formation were his studies in philosophy with two thinkers. Sayyid Ḥusayn Bādkubihī (d. 1358/1939) was a student in Tehran of the abovementioned Sayyid Abū-l-Ḥasan Jilva, an Avicennan critic of Mullā Ṣadrā (and this may partly account for his more analytic approach to the Safavid thinker and his preference for Avicenna).[2] Bādkubihī had also studied with the *ʿirfān*-inclined Tehrani teacher at the Madrasa-yi Sipahsālār, Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkivarī (d. 1332/1914) and hence one can see the coming together of Avicennism and *ʿirfān* in his teaching that influenced Ṭabāṭabāʾī (Suhā 1980, 71–72). His second teacher was Sayyid ʿAlī Qāḍī (d. 1365/1947), a major exponent of *ʿirfān* in the guise of "ethical instruction" (*akhlāq*). Ṭabāṭabāʾī in his own account says that he studied with Bādkubihī for six years, reading the *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma* of Sabzavārī, the *Asfār* and *al-Mashāʿir* of Mullā Ṣadrā, the complete *Shifāʾ* of Avicenna (one suspects an emphasis on the metaphysics and the logic), as well as the *Uthūlūjiyā* (*Theology of Aristotle*, the famous paraphrase of sections of Plotinus's *Enneads* IV–VI classically attributed to Aristotle), and the *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid* of Ibn Turka (Subḥānī 1982, 56). Bādkubihī developed his logical and analytic skills, and in order to hone them, directed Ṭabāṭabāʾī to study Euclidean mathematics with Sayyid Abū l-Qāsim Khwānsārī. Sayyid ʿAlī Qāḍī had been a prominent student and even teacher of jurisprudence and in recent works has been described as *faqīh-i mutaʾallih* bringing together *ʿirfān* and law in a new fusion; he stressed a spiritual path through prayer vigils, extensive prostrations, and the methods of *dhikr*, including the Yūnusiyya (*lā ilāha illā anta subḥānaka innī kuntu min al-ẓālimīn*; cf. Qurʾān 21:87) that was traced back through his own spiritual master Sayyid Aḥmad Karbalāʾī and his Āqā Ḥusayn-qulī Hamadānī (d. 1311/1893) and beyond (Nis̱ārī 1996). Qāḍī also taught Ṭabāṭābāʾī the works of Ibn ʿArabī, not least *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. This was a central aspect of the *ʿirfān* curriculum from the nineteenth century. Another aspect of the influence of Sayyid ʿAlī Qāḍī on Ṭabāṭabāʾī was his method of exegesis, *tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi-l-Qurʾān*, which was supposedly the foundation of Ṭabāṭabāʾī's method in *al-Mīzān*.

Ṭabāṭabāʾī moved to Qom in March 1946. In Qom, he struggled to make ends meet. Not being recognized as a jurist to be emulated (*marjaʿ*) he did not receive *khums* that would allow him to establish a patronage network and funds to sustain students. He instead focused on philosophy and exegesis, both disciplines being marginal to the curriculum of the *ḥawza* and the former considered with some suspicion. Ṭabāṭabāʾī wrote about his conflict with the prominent *marjaʿ* Sayyid Ḥusayn Burūjirdī (d. 1962) precisely on this point:

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[2] Jilva was born in Aḥmadābād in India, where his father was a physician. As a boy, he moved to Isfahan and studied philosophy with the students of Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831), namely his son Mīrzā Ḥasan (d. 1280/1864), Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Chīnī (d. 1264/1848), and Muḥammad Jaʿfar Langarūdī (d. 1294/1877). He became famous as a critic of Mullā Ṣadrā, rejecting on Avicennan grounds the notion of motion in substance, the creation of the cosmos in time, the identity thesis of knowledge, and the nominalist understanding of essences, and he affirmed the Sufi conception of the unity of existence, criticizing the Sadrian notion of modulation in existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*); see Jilva *Majmūʿa*, 53–80. Accordingly, he represents the continuity of the Avicennan tradition in its rejection of Mullā Ṣadrā, which had Safavid precursors.

> I came from Tabriz to Qom only in order to correct the beliefs of the students on the basis of the truth and to confront the false beliefs of materialists and others. When Āyat Allāh [Burūjirdī] was studying with a small group of students with Jahāngīr Khān [Qashqāʾī, a philosopher of the school of Tehran], the students and the people in general were believers. Their beliefs were pure, and they did not need public sessions for the teaching of the *Asfār*. But today every student who comes to Qom comes with a suitcase full of doubts and problems. We must come to the aid of these students and prepare them to confront the materialists on a sound basis by teaching them authentic Islamic philosophy. I will not therefore abandon the teaching of the *Asfār*. At the same time, however, since I consider Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī to be the repository of the authority of the *sharīʿa*, the matter will take on a different aspect if he commands me to abandon the teaching of the *Asfār*. (Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭihrānī, *Mihr*, 104–6; Dabashi 1993, 334–35)

This was not only about the legitimacy of philosophy and *ʿirfān* but also a conflict of authority. Given his recent arrival in Qom and his relatively junior status, Ṭabāṭabāʾī obliged by discontinuing his public classes while continuing to teach in private classes by 1947 (Āmulī 2007, 223). The paramount status of jurisprudence was preserved; clearly Burūjirdī was at the height of his influence, and his closeness to the monarchy further bolstered his authority in Qom.

Nevertheless, Ṭabāṭabāʾī considered philosophy to play a major social role and alongside exegesis to propose a dual critique of the materialism and secularism of the age, clear in the rise of the attraction of communism in Shīʿī Iran and Iraq. These disciplines, along with the more reflective and spiritually exercised practice of *ʿirfān* not only constituted a means for purifying the self and elevating the intellect as a basic for an individual active in society, but also pointed to a key insight of Ṭabāṭabāʾī, that there were only two possible ways of understanding and decoding the nature of reality: through revelation that is mediated by an infallible imam or prophet, or through inner disclosure (*kashf*) and vision (*shuhūd*) in the process of *ʿirfān* (Āmulī 2007, 25–26). He taught a small group of students who had earlier begun studying with Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī (d. 1372/1952) the works of Avicenna and Mullā Ṣadrā.[3] Ṭabāṭabāʾī demonstrated his independent approach to philosophy, in particular criticizing Mullā Ṣadrā's eschatological attempt to recover corporeal resurrection, and extended the concept of motion in the category of substance to constitute something that later students described as a "theory of relativity" in which time was a dimension alongside bodies in the state of perspectival change (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Mīzān*, I, 7, VII, 133, XIII, 224–25, XIX, 152–53; Pūyān 2009, 664–73).

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[3] Āshtiyānī was a key figure in philosophy in Tehran. He had studied *ʿirfān* and the thought of Suhrawardī with Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkivarī (himself a student of Qumshihī, Zunūzī, and Jilva), Avicennan philosophy with Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī, and the Sadrian tradition with Mīr ʿAlī Shīrāzī. Āshtiyānī seems to have been a socially engaged thinker using the tools of philosophy to explain the faith in the modern world. His students included some of the significant hybrid thinkers of the twentieth century, such as Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, ʿAbd al-Javād Falāṭūrī, and Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī. Two important works of his have been published: a set of glosses on the *Sharḥ-i manẓūma* of Sabzavārī, and *Asās al-tawḥīd* on the mystical notion of the unity of existence and the Neoplatonic axiom *ex uno non fit nisi unum*. See Madadī 2000.

From 1949, he began to hold some classes in Tehran on *ʿirfān* and *akhlāq*, taking as base texts the work *Risāla-yi sayr va sulūk* attributed to Sayyid Mahdī Ṭabāṭabāʾī Baḥr al-ʿulūm (d. 1211/1797) and the correspondence mentioned above (Baḥr al-ʿulūm 1995, trans. Raja 2013; Ḥusaynī Ṭihrānī, *Mihr*, 107–12). Some of the transcripts of these classes were published as *Lubb al-lubāb* by his student Ṭihrānī (Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭihrānī, *Lubb*, trans. Faghfoory 2003). Ṭihrānī, writing after the death of Ṭabāṭabāʾī and no doubt furthering his own holistic approach, suggests that he believed in the complete homology between philosophy, mysticism, and the law and that he was a master in all because of the concomitance of law and ethics: in fact, in Ṭihrānī's words, for Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *ʿirfān* and philosophy were the two foundations of the law (Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭihrānī, *Mihr*, 122–24).

Ṭabāṭabāʾī's social conscience led to the convening of a group of philosophically minded students to combat the rise of materialism and secularism that culminated in the work of Murtażā Muṭahharī entitled *Uṣūl-i falsafa va ravish-i riʾālizm* (*Principles of Philosophy and the Realist Method*). He began to meet Henry Corbin (d. 1978), a regular visitor to Iran and leading philosopher and historian of Islamic thought, from 1958, and their engagement led to a number of publications, and one suspects that Corbin's esotericizing project was partly influenced by Ṭabāṭabāʾī (Shayegan 1990). He thus became a major source of authority for those engaged in the new theology (*kalām-i jadīd*), fulfilling the role of the public theologian, which increasingly became significant after the Revolution. *Principles of Philosophy* presented a succinct introduction to philosophy arranged by Muṭahharī into (numerically significant) fourteen chapters or sections—and as we shall see, this was the broad structure followed by Ṭabāṭabāʾī in his curricula for seminary students: the first engaged with our definition of philosophy, knowledge, and science, the next three on knowledge and perception, establishing what he meant by realism, the fifth on how we build our knowledge from simple to complex notions, the sixth on mental constructions and intentions (*idrākāt-i iʿtibāriyya*), the seventh on the nature of existence, the eighth on possibility and the question of free will, the ninth on causality, the tenth on the key notions of time and motion, the eleventh on types of priority and posteriority and their implications for creation, the twelfth on how multiplicity arises from unity, the thirteenth on essences and qualities, and the last on the nature of God and the God-world relationship. This structure—as with his seminary texts—was designed to demonstrate that the principles of philosophy are what are needed for determining the existence both of the immaterial and of God. Since dialectical materialism and its concomitant atheism was the main intellectual challenge, it should be refuted with the affirmation of the immaterial and the existence of God.

Crucially for Ṭabāṭabāʾī, philosophy is based on the optimistic notion that humans can discern the reality that they inhabit and can distinguish successfully (and understand) concepts and things that have reference in extramental reality (*ḥaqāʾiq*) and concepts that have sense without reference in extramental reality (*iʿtibārāt*), and that this notion is juxtaposed with skepticism and "sophistry" that fail to provide any strict definitions or standards by which we make sense of our reality (Muṭahharī, *Uṣūl*, I, 37–38). This is very much the Aristotelian notion of metaphysics or first philosophy as the master science that provides the basic classification and tools for inquiry into the other spheres of knowledge and their disciplines. At its core is the philosophical method of apodeixis—demonstrative argument and proof theory (*burhān*). Thus insofar as metaphysics is founded upon argument relating to things that exist—have reference in extramental reality—it is synonymous with realism. In this sense, Ṭabāṭabāʾī is strictly invoking not a Platonic notion of realism (even though he draws upon his precedent for refuting "sophistry"), but a simple affirmation that there is an extramental reality that we do not doubt and that we as human rational agents are capable of knowing, whether it is the physical universe or the immaterial realm that includes God (Muṭahharī, *Uṣūl*, I, 55–56). He could therefore be said to be a "naive realist."

Ṭabāṭabāʾī did write both on the Qurʾān and on *ḥadīth* in the manner of a philosophically minded *mujtahid*, using his independent reasoning. He was commissioned to oversee the new edition of the *ḥadīth* collection *Biḥār al-anwār* of Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699), and he wrote a series of glosses correcting Majlisī's understanding of texts that resulted, Ṭabāṭabāʾī believed, from his ignorance of philosophy (ʿĀbidī 2002, 669–84; Miyānjī 1999; Khādimī and ʿArabī 2012, 69–92). One particular area of contention concerned the nature of the intellect (*ʿaql*) as discussed in the tradition as exemplified in the first main book of *Biḥār*; Majlisī's claim that his understanding of the technical uses of the term suggested that philosophers misunderstood the concept—or rather conflated their notion of an intellect as an immaterial substance with the notion of the *ʿaql* in *ḥadīth*—was refuted by Ṭabāṭabāʾī, perhaps also given the clear hostility of Majlisī to philosophizing (Majlisī, *Biḥār*, I, 99–101). Ṭabāṭabāʾī's services were thus discontinued beyond volume 9 and demonstrated his single-minded exercise of his independent reasoning. He was involved further in penning philosophical glosses on *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* of Kulaynī (d. 330/942) and the edition of *Wasāʾil al-shīʿa* of al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104/1693).

His other major project was, of course, his exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* that he commenced in 1954 and completed in 1972. His student Javādī Āmulī argues that Ṭabāṭabāʾī undertook the project not only to recenter the seminary on the Qurʾān and demonstrate the significance of a Qurʾānocentric *ʿirfān*, but also because he saw his role as the vicegerent of God (*khalīfat Allāh*) who was the one authorized to comment upon the scripture (Āmulī 2007, 54–57). Any act of exegesis, and especially one that claims to be comprehensive in its rational and scriptural discussions like this one, is ultimately a claim to authority, to being a spokesman for the divine and defining what the scripture means for us in our time. Exegesis is thus not just the appropriation of the divine word for the disciplines that form the exegete; it is an arrogation of authority.

Most of the accounts of Ṭabāṭabāʾī's life are hagiographical and posthumously compiled by his students—and it is clear that no one lives a neat narrative life in the way in which biographers conceive of it after the fact. Ṭihrānī in particular revels in the supernatural in order to construct the life of a saint—tried and tested and having to overcome obstacles, becoming recognized in later life and gathering disciples and performing miracles, and then finally dying in adversity but with contentment in the heart after an illness on 17 Muḥarram 1402 / December 1981.

His lasting philosophical legacy lay in the two new seminary texts that he composed, *Bidāyat al-ḥikma* and then *Nihāyat al-ḥikma*, that were quickly adopted in the curriculum of the *ḥawza*. *Bidāyat al-ḥikma* was completed in Rajab 1390 / September 1970, and *Nihāyat al-ḥikma* in Muḥarram 1395 / January 1975—both were published shortly thereafter. These works were based on his attempt to provide a propaedeutic to understanding the *Asfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā in classes at the Madrasa-yi Ḥaqqānī from around 1950. Once the text of *Bidāyat al-ḥikma* was completed, he gave it to Javādī Āmulī to teach it, and their correspondence about that class has been published (Āmulī 2007, 306–68). Ṭihrānī, making the analogy with the study of jurisprudence and Ṭabāṭabāʾī acting as a *marjaʿ* in philosophy and *ʿirfān*, uses the analogy of the *khārij* class to describe the origins of *Bidāya* and *Nihāya*—a class that went beyond the text and was designed to bring a fresh perspective on the study of philosophy (Ḥusaynī-yi Ṭihrānī, *Mihr*, 46). His work *al-Ḥaqāʾiq wa-l-iʿtibārāt* not only insisted upon the metaphysical distinctions between real extramental entities and mental intentions, but also posited a distinction between rationally grounded disciplines and conventionally constructed ones—philosophy and *ʿirfān* were of the former, and jurisprudence of the latter category (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Majmūʿa*, 339–77). At the same time, there is evidence of a more holistic approach in Ṭabāṭabāʾī's work that explicitly identifies the study and spiritual practice of philosophy and *ʿirfān* with the very faith of Shīʿī Islam, exemplified in his study of ʿAlī and divine philosophy. Thus again one can see the way in which Ṭabāṭabāʾī privileged his areas of expertise over the main pursuits of the *ḥawza*.

29.2. THE *NIHĀYAT AL-ḤIKMA*

Nihāyat al-ḥikma represents the culmination of Ṭabāṭabāʾī's philosophical contribution to the seminary and fits within the wider context of his agenda to provide not only a consolation and support for the new dialectical theology of the modern age but also a firm, rational refutation of the materialistic "old atheism" of the postwar period led by the communists. The structure of the texts follows the unfolding of the metaphysics in Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*. This is then modified through the structure of the popular school-text the *Sharḥ-i manẓūma* of Sabzavārī. The structure of the *Nihāya* is broadly the same as *Bidāyat al-ḥikma*, with twelve "stages" (*marḥala*)—the difference being that in the *Nihāya*, issues are discussed in greater detail and taken further, and in some cases rearranged. Knowledge and intellection as well as the discussion about the nature of God are included in the *Nihāya*, following the structure of the *Asfār* (and even the *Tuḥfat al-ḥakīm* of Iṣfahānī). Table 29.1 shows the correspondences between the four texts.

Table 29.1 Comparison of the Contents of Some Key School-texts in Philosophy and Theology

	Asfār	*Bidāyat al-ḥikma*	*Nihāyat al-ḥikma*	*Sharḥ al-manẓūma*
Marḥala I	Safar I Marḥala I Manhaj I on general ontology (*fī-l-umūr al-ʿāmma*)	General ontology (*Kulliyyāt mabāḥith al-wujūd*) 12 chapters including on *nafs al-amr* and non-existence	*Aḥkām al-wujūd al-kulliyya* 5 chapters summarizing issues in *Bidāya*	Maqṣad I Gem 1—on existence and non-existence 15 chapters
Marḥala II	Safar I Marḥala I Manhaj III on mental existence	Mental existence (*wujūd dhihnī*) One chapter	Independent and dependent existence (*al-mustaqill wa-l-rābiṭ*) 3 chapters	Maqṣad I Gem 1 Chapter 7 on seven proofs on mental existence
Marḥala III	Safar I Marḥala II on *rābiṭ*	Independent and dependent existence 3 chapters	Mental existence Single chapter	————
Marḥala IV	Safar I Marḥala I Manhaj II on modalities	On the modalities (*fī-l-mawādd al-thalāth*) 9 chapters	On the modalities 8 chapters	Maqṣad I Gem 2—on Necessity and Possibility
Marḥala V	Safar I Marḥala IV on essence	On essence (*al-māhīya*) and its properties 8 chapters	On essence and its properties 7 chapters	Maqṣad I Gem 5—On Essence
Marḥala VI	Safar II Marḥala I on Categories	On the ten (Aristotelian) Categories 11 chapters	On the ten Categories 21 chapters—far more on psychic instances of categories and on the mind-body problem	Maqṣad II on Substance and Categories
Marḥala VII	Safar I Marḥala VI on Cause and Effect	On Cause and Effect (*fī-l-ʿilla wa-l-maʿlūl*) 11 chapters	On the One and the Many (*fī-l-wāḥid wa-l-kathīr*) 15 chapters	Gem 7—On Cause and Effect
Marḥala VIII	Safar I Marḥala V on Unity and Multiplicity	On the One and Many 10 chapters	On Cause and Effect 9 chapters	Maqṣad I Gem 6—On Unity and Multiplicity

Table 29.1 (Continued)

	Asfār	*Bidāyat al-ḥikma*	*Nihāyat al-ḥikma*	*Sharḥ al-manẓūma*
Marḥala IX	Safar I Marḥala VII on Potentiality and Actuality	On Priority and posteriority and eternity and incipience (*fī l-sibq wa-l-luḥūq wa-l-qidam wa-l-ḥudūth*) 3 chapters	On Potentiality and Actuality (*fī l-quwwa wa-l-fiʿl*) 14 chapters that include discussion on creation, time and motion	Maqṣad I Gem 4—on Potentiality and Actuality
Marḥala X	Safar I Marḥala IX on Eternity and Incipience	On Potentiality and Actuality 16 chapters	On Priority and Posteriority, and Eternity and Incipience 8 chapters including a discussion of Mīr Dāmād's theory of perpetual creation	Maqṣad I Gem 3—on Eternity and Incipience
Marḥala XI	Safar I Marḥala X on Identity Thesis	On Knowledge (*fī l-ʿilm wa-l-ʿālim wa-l-maʿlūm*) 12 chapters including discussion on immediate knowledge and the identity thesis	On the Identity thesis (*fī l-ʿaql wa-l-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl*) 15 chapters	———
Marḥala XII	Safar III On nature of God	On the Necessary Existence (*al-wājib al-wujūd*) 14 chapters including proof for existence and on Qurʾanic attributes	On the Necessary Existence 24 chapters includes further about the 'imaginal realm' (*ʿālam al-mithāl*) and on emanationist cosmogony	Maqṣad III on God Gem 1 on Divine Essence Gem 2 on Divine Attributes Gem 3 on Divine Agency

Ṭabāṭabāʾī opens with a number of remarks that express our plurality as human beings as well as the fact that just because we cannot sense things does not demonstrate that they do not exist (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 3–4). We, human beings, are many and diverse. We see each other; we see objects, planets, stars, animals, and plants. Our senses help us smell and taste. Moreover, we feel love, hate, and anger. We move, we settle. All of this leads us to believe that there is such a thing as existence (*anna hunāk* *wujūdan*).[4] This is a simple given that we cannot doubt (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 4; Miṣbāḥ-i Yazdī, *Taʿlīqa*, 5–6).

But what happens when we doubt this existence? Or when we conclude that something exists when in fact it does not, and vice versa? To answer these questions, writes Ṭabāṭabāʾī, one must find a suitable method that can help us discern what is real and what is unreal. That kind of certainty is attainable through a tool called demonstration (*burhān*). Philosophy, adds Ṭabāṭabāʾī, is "a proper intellectual enquiry (*baḥth*) that relies on demonstration in order to reach certainty (*yaqīn*) and in order to discern the true nature of things" (*Nihāya*, 4–5). Since existence applies to all things that exist, and by definition existence cannot leave anything out, philosophy is ultimately the study of existent things insofar as they exist (*al-mawjūd min ḥayth huwa mawjūd*). In the view of Ṭabāṭabāʾī, philosophy, or metaphysics, is an essential and necessary aspect of human intellectual activity. It is, after all, the "mother science" upon which all other sciences rely; and, since "existent" is its subject matter, philosophy, unlike all other sciences, does not need another science to define it. It is clear—as we saw above—that consistent with the tradition, by philosophy he means "first philosophy" or "metaphysics" (Miṣbāḥ-i Yazdī, *Taʿlīqa*, 5). He clarifies this by stating that he will not go into detailed expositions but wants to establish the principles of inquiry (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 4; Miṣbāḥ-i Yazdī, *Taʿlīqa*, 6). Technically, it is metaphysics that inquires into the essential accidents of existence and hence provides the subject matter of inquiry for other branches (cf. Miṣbāḥ-i Yazdī, *Taʿlīqa*, 7–12).

29.3. On Existence (*Wujūd*)

According to Ṭabāṭabāʾī, existence is predicated univocally of its instances (*mushtarak maʿnawī*). It is the proper subject matter of metaphysics. He does not raise modulation (*tashkīk*) here yet but starts with the first principle of how we perceive our reality. Anything that exists can be taken to be an instance of existence. For example, humans exist, the sun exists, and so on; all of these yield some information about existence, its states and modes. It is important to note that existence is not a property of things by which we define them; rather, existence is the very reality by virtue of which things exist. Ṭabāṭabāʾī takes serious objection to those who claim existence is an equivocal predication (*lafẓ mushtarak*) and an entity that subsists in every essence (*Nihāya*, 8). To demonstrate the falsity of this "silly claim" (*qawl sakhīf*), Ṭabāṭabāʾī says it is sufficient to consider "the existence of God," "the existence of contingent beings," and "the existence of accidents." Upon minimal consideration, one will realize that "existence" in this context denotes something real and meaningful that is more than a semantic commonality. Quoting Mullā Ṣadrā, he notes that the concept of existence (*mafhūm al-wujūd*) is something all essences share, for an essence cannot conceivably *be* without existence.

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[4] Here Ṭabāṭabāʾī is echoing Avicenna's famous opening proposition in the *Najāt* that says, "There is no doubt that there is existence" (*lā shakka anna hunā wujūdan*) (Ibn Sīnā, *Najāt*, 134); the insistence at the beginning of the metaphysics refuting the reduction of existence to what is sensible (*maḥsūs*) alone also recalls the beginning of *namaṭ* IV of the *Ishārāt* (Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 263 ff.).

Equally silly (*naẓīrahu fī-l-sakhāfa*) is the claim that the concept of existence is predicated equivocally of the Necessary (*al-wājib*) and contingent. To counter this claim, Ṭabāṭabāʾī draws on the famous distinction between the concept (*mafhūm*) and reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of existence, which is central to Mullā Ṣadrā and his ontology. When considered mentally, existence is comparable to a universal: it is applicable to multiple objects univocally. Existence applies to all things that exist, whereas an essence applies to a limited number of things, as in the case of a genus or species (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 8–9). Every individual substance is a unique being that participates in the all-inclusive reality of existence. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, and following him Ṭabāṭabāʾī, even non-existence (*ʿadam*) and mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhihnī*) are considered a special instance of existence. Mullā Ṣadrā takes pains to show that what the mind perceives of the reality of existence is only its mental representation, which is removed from the actual reality of things as they are. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, we can grasp this vexing philosophical problem once we come to terms with the radical distinction between the concept and reality of existence. He writes:

> Every concrete being represented in the mind with its reality ought to maintain its essence despite the change in its modality of existence (*naḥw al-wujūd*). The reality of existence is such that it is in the extramental world (*fi l-aʿyān*). Everything whose reality is such that it is in the extramental world cannot be found in the mind [as it is]; otherwise this would lead to the alteration (*inqilāb*) of something from its own reality [into something else]. Therefore, the reality of existence cannot be found in any mind. What is represented of existence in the soul whereby it takes on universality and generality (*al-kulliyya wa-l-ʿumūm*) is not the reality of existence but one of the aspects of its constitution and one of its terms. (Shīrāzī, *Asfār*, I, 45)

Everything is an instantiation and particularization (*tashakhkhuṣ*) of existence, which, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, unfolds itself in a myriad of ways, modes, states, and degrees. Universals used to designate existence as a concept do not, properly speaking, belong to existence itself; they apply only to its degrees of descent. When we consider the above formulations against the claim that the concept of existence is an equivocal predication applied equally to the necessary and contingents, the claim falters and loses its philosophical meaning. The concept of existence is thus applied to the Necessary and contingents univocally (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 9). The reality of existence, however, is a different matter altogether. Since the Necessary has no essence, no other being can partake of whatever we may conceive of the Necessary's essence.

The primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) over essence is one of the central themes in Ṭabāṭabāʾī's ontology. The debate on the primacy of which aspect of the distinction that pertains to contingent beings has a venerable history. For Ṭabāṭabāʾī, primacy gives actual reality to existents in the extramental world, and it accounts for ontological affirmation. Following Mullā Ṣadrā, Ṭabāṭabāʾī explains that existence is the principal reality that establishes things in concrete existence and saturates them with meaning (*Nihāya*, 9). The main challenge to a realist understanding of existence came from the Illuminationist tradition, represented chiefly by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī. Suhrawardī raised two objections against the notion of existence as a real predicate. First, he argued that if we take existence to be a real attribute of essence, then essence, in order to possess this attribute, has to exist prior to existence, in which case existence would be an extraneous quality imposed upon something that already exists. Second, if existence is the sole agent that constitutes the reality of things, then existence will have to exist before being a constituent of external reality, and this second existence will have to exist, and so on ad infinitum. It follows therefore that existence is purely mentally posited (*iʿtibārī*), not the principal constituent of reality in the extramental world (Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, 48–50).

Following Mullā Ṣadrā, Ṭabāṭabāʾī rejects Suhrawardī's deduction and asserts that we cannot logically say "Existence exists" just as we do not say "Whiteness is white" (*Nihāya*, 11–12). To underscore his point, Ṭabāṭabāʾī lists ten proofs that, in his view, demonstrate beyond doubt that essences are derivative and not, therefore, real. Due to considerations of space, we will content ourselves with the main thrust of the general argument proffered by Ṭabāṭabāʾī. Generally, Ṭabāṭabāʾī argues that existence cannot be characterized (*ittiṣāf*) by intelligible predicables that, properly speaking, apply to essences. For example, we apply terms such as universal, particular, genus, species, and differentia to a multitude of objects. Each of these notions is a secondary intelligible (*al-maʿqūl al-thānī*), or a second-order predicate, which is an abstracted notion. Secondary intelligibles such as universal and genus are mental principles constructed by the mind and thus are not real beings (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 12–14).

According to Ṭabāṭabāʾī, existence exists by itself, and actualization of existence in the external world takes place by itself, not by virtue of something else, which is the case for essences. It is true that existence, when considered mentally, is a general notion without any corresponding reality. It is at this level of abstraction that we take existence as an attribute of something. In actuality, however, existence is not an extraneous quality impressed upon existent objects but the very reality by virtue of which they exist (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 16).

The modulation of existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) is the next key step in his ontology. Like much of Ṭabāṭabāʾī's metaphysics, the roots of this problem are original with Mullā Ṣadrā; though some students of Mullā Ṣadrā such as ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Lāhījī claim that a variant of the problem has its roots in the writings of Sufi thinkers. Lāhījī writes:

> Some Sufis claim that reality consists of a singular essence (*dhāt wāḥida*) that is completely free from composition. This essence has attributes that are in fact identical to it. This essence *is* the reality of existence (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*); it is free from the notions of contingency and nonexistence. Whatever perceived limitations [this essence] has,

> they are nothing but mental constructs. Accordingly, one is led to believe in the reality of multiple existents. This, however, is false. (Lāhījī, *Shawāriq*, I, 30)

Lāhījī is critical of Sufis who deny the reality of multiple existents, which, according to the school of Mullā Ṣadrā, are distinct degrees of a singular whole. For Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers, existence is predicated of all things that exist *in concreto*. Ṭabāṭabāʾī explains that in this most generic sense, existence applies to things univocally (*ḥaml bi-l-tawāṭuʾ*). Predication, however, takes place with varying degrees of intensity (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 17). As for the term *tashkīk*, literally meaning "ambiguity," it can have different meanings. In logic, the concept of existence is predicated of the reality of the Necessary Being and other contingent beings equivocally (*ḥaml bi-l-tashkīk*). In ontology, however, the reality of existence, which is at once modulated, or gradational, and singular, is best understood by the phrase *tashkīk al-wujūd*, or the modulation of existence. In the Sadrian tradition, existence is a singular reality, but when considered in the phenomenal world, it admits multiplicity. Paradoxically, what multiple existents have in common is existence; but existence is also the source of ontological distinction between them. Existence is thus hierarchical and differentiated through degrees of intensification and diminution (*tashaddud wa-taḍāʿuf*). Ṭabāṭabāʾī explains:

> The truth of the matter is that [existence] is a singular but modulated [or gradational] reality (*ḥaqīqa wāḥida fī ʿayn annahā kathīra*). This is because when we look at all its different grades of intensification, we reach the conclusion that existence is the source of commonality. It is impossible to conclude that the One comes from many unless the many are in fact One. It has become clear that existence is a modulated or gradational reality (*al-wujūd ḥaqīqa mushakkaka*) with different grades [of intensification and diminution]. Consider the following analogy of light: a pure and uncorrupted mind (*al-fahm al-sādhij*) will understand that [light is a] singular reality with different degrees of intensification and diminution (*al-shidda wa-l-ḍuʿf*). For example, the intensity of light can be intense, medium, or weak. The intense grade does not possess an extra nonlight entity that is missing from the debilitated; what is common to them is light; and it is light also that is the source of their variance or distinction. Light is a simple reality. In our phenomenal experience, we perceive light as multiple entities, but in actual reality it is singular. Similarly, existence is a singular reality with different degrees of intensification, diminution, priority, posteriority, and hierarchical rank. (*Nihāya*, 17)

The remainder of the ontology considers the predication of the nonexistent, properties of essence, and the predicables. Throughout his presentation, Ṭabāṭabāʾī stresses the discursive and the rational—even on the notion of modulation that draws crucially on the monism of the school of Ibn ʿArabī, he does not allow for any drift into mystical discourse. The hard, analytical style by which he characterizes philosophy remains central to this exposition.

29.4. On Knowledge

Knowledge, like existence, does not lend itself to easy definition. But any attempts to define it are futile. Ṭabāṭabāʾī writes, "That we acquire a knowledge of things is self-evident, and so is the concept of it" (*Nihāya*, 236). Mullā Ṣadrā, and following him Ṭabāṭabāʾī, points to an obvious parallel between knowledge (*ʿilm*) and existence. In Mullā Ṣadrā's view, knowledge is a mode of existence (*naḥw al-wujūd*); its ultimate object is existence, for when we say that we know something, we affirm or deny a particular aspect of existence.

Ṭabāṭabāʾī's epistemology focuses on two accounts of knowledge, which are exhaustive in his view: knowledge by acquisition, or mediated knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuṣūlī*), and knowledge by presence, or immediate knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*). In the case of the former, knowledge is attained through the mediation of mental concepts that represent objects of thought and perception. Put differently, we cognize externally existing objects; they are present before us (*taḥḍar ʿindanā*) with their essences, though not with their external existence and its accompanying external properties. In the case of the latter, that is, *al-ʿilm al-ḥudūrī*, it is the knowledge each of us has of his own self. One cannot fail to be conscious of oneself in any circumstance, "in solitude or in company, in sleep or in wakefulness, or in any other state" (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 237). Ṭabāṭabāʾī explains:

> This consciousness is not by virtue of the presence of the essence of the self to us; it is not present as a concept, or known through mediated knowledge. That is because a mental concept, of whatever kind, is always capable of corresponding to a multiplicity of objects, and [when considered as referring to a particular object] its individuality is only due to the external existence [to which it corresponds]. Now that we cognize in relation to ourselves—that is, what we refer to as "I"—is something essentially individuated, incapable of corresponding to multiple things. Individuality is a property of existence; hence our knowledge of ourselves is by virtue of their presence for us with their very external existence, which is the ground of individuation and external properties. (*Nihāya*, 236)

From the above, it becomes clear that knowledge is the "presence" of an immaterial existent for an immaterial existent, whether what is apprehended is the same as that which apprehends or is something else.

Following the *falsafa* model, Ṭabāṭabāʾī says there are four stages of the intellect. First, there is an intellect that is in a state of potentiality in relation to all intelligibles; this is known as the material intellect (*al-ʿaql al-hayūlānī*), for it bears similarity to prime matter (*hayūlā*), which is devoid of intelligibles. Second, there is an intellect that grasps self-evident concepts (*taṣawwurāt*) and judgments (*taṣdīqāt*); it is known as intellect by proficiency (*al-ʿaql bi-l-malaka*). Third, there is an intellect in act (*al-ʿaql bi-l-fiʿl*) that grasps speculative matters through the mediation of self-evident concepts and judgments. Fourth, there is an all-inclusive intellect, known as the acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*), which partakes of all self-evident and speculative intelligibles corresponding to the realities of the higher and lower modes of existence by virtue of having all of them present before it and its actual consciousness of them (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 238–39). Related to this are three types of intellection relating to knowledge by acquaintance: first, the intellect has the potential to know a range of objects but only knows some; second, the intellect can organize and compartmentalize a range of objects; and third, the most significant, the intellect is so developed that it is capable of knowing many objects of knowledge simultaneously (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 247–48).

Since knowledge by acquaintance is the default position, it relates to his distinction between objects of knowledge that exist in extramental reality and those that are merely mentally posited—*ḥaqīqī* and *iʿtibārī*. Real objects of acquaintance relate to concepts that have reference in extramental reality and are capable of efficient causality in that realm of existence, though in a tensed manner since at times they may be concepts of pure potentiality or memory. Those objects that are merely in the mind have sense through reference to other concepts that are in the mind, and some of these may at their base be real concepts (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 256). Fundamentally, Ṭabāṭabāʾī, following Mullā Ṣadrā, holds to a correspondence theory of knowledge—for propositions to hold true, their terms must correspond to some mode of existence.

However, the most important discussion in epistemology relates to the identity thesis, the union of the knowing subject and object and the very intellect itself (*ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl wa-l-ʿaql*). The unification argument has its roots in Plato and his followers. Plato's theory of knowledge does not draw any clear line between ontology and epistemology; the question of what and how we know is linked up with the question of what there is. However, the argument found little support in the Islamic Peripatetic tradition. Al-Fārābī (d. 338/950), for instance, rejects it, but he does adopt its vocabulary in some of his writings, claiming that the idea of unification between the human soul and the active intellect was discussed in Aristotle's *De Anima* 3.5 (Fārābī, *Siyāsa*, 79). Similarly, Avicenna goes as far as to ridicule the argument by describing it as "poetical uttering of no intellectual value" (*qawl shiʿrī ghayr maʿqūl*) (Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 327). He writes:

> A group of [supposedly learned] people have opined that the intellecting substance (*al-jawhar al-ʿāqil*), when intellecting an intelligible form, becomes [identical with] it. Let us imagine a situation where the intellecting substance intellects (*yaʿqul*) A. According to their opinion, it [i.e., the intellecting substance] becomes identical with A, namely the object of intellection (*al-maʿqūl*). Is it then the same as it was had it not intellected A? Or is this not the case? If it is like before, then [it does not make any difference] whether it intellected [A] or not. If this is not the case, then has it not changed into it or remained as it was? If it did change into it [i.e., intellecting substance becomes identical with A]—all the while its identity remained the same—then this is like all the other transformations (*al-istiḥālāt*), and contrary to what they claim. If, [however,] it remains itself, then it has lost its identity and something else has come into being (*ḥadatha shayʾ ākhar*), not that it has become something else. If you ponder over this, you will realize that this [transformation, in order to come

> about] requires a common matter (*hayūla mushtaraka*) and a composite rather than simple renewal (*tajaddud*). (Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 324–25)

Avicenna denies the claim that something can become something else while preserving its essential identity. This is why he rejects the unification argument and denies vehemently that when the soul intellects intelligible substances, it becomes identical with them.

According to Ṭabāṭabāʾī, however, attainment of knowledge means apprehension (*ḥuṣūl*) of the known, or the intelligible, by the knower, or the intellector; for knowledge is identical with that which is known by itself, because

> we do not mean anything by knowledge except the apprehension of the known by us. And the apprehension of a thing and its presence is nothing except its existence, and its existence is itself. The apprehension of the known, or the intelligible, by the knower, or the intellector, does not mean anything except its union (*ittiḥād*) with the knower, whether the known is immediate (*ḥuḍūriyyan*) or mediated (*ḥuṣūliyyan*). Thus if the immediately known is a substance subsisting by itself, its existence is for itself (*wujūd li-nafsih*) while at the same time it is for-the-knower, and hence the knower is united with it. If the immediately known is something existent-for-its-subject, as the known existence is existence-for-the-knower, the knower is united with its subject. (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 240–43)

Moreover, an accident is one of the planes of the existence of its subject, not something extraneous to it. Hence it is in a relation that is akin to something united with its subject. Similarly, the mediated known is existent-for-the-knower, irrespective of whether it is a substance existing for itself or something existent-for-other-than-itself. An implication of its existence for the knower is the knower's union with it.

Accordingly, apprehension by the knower is a property of knowledge, though not every kind of apprehension, but an apprehension of something that is in pure actuality and absolutely devoid of all potentiality. That is because we know intuitively that the known insofar as it is known has no potentiality to become another thing; it is not susceptible to change, nor can it become something other than what it is. Accordingly, it involves the apprehension of something that is immaterial and free from all traces of potentiality. The immediacy of the known requires it to be something possessing complete actuality, free from any association with matter and potentiality that may make it deficient and incomplete in relation to its potential perfections. Further, the immediacy of the known requires that the knower acquiring its knowledge should also possess complete actuality, not being deficient in any respect arising from association with matter. Hence, the knower is also immaterial and free from potentiality. From the above discussion, it becomes clear that knowledge is the "presence" of an immaterial existent for an immaterial existent, whether what is apprehended is the same as that which apprehends—as in the case of a thing's knowledge of itself—or is something else—as in the case of thing's knowledge of essences external to it (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Bidāya*, 127). Unlike

Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā, Ṭabāṭabāʾī's quest for certain knowledge and epistemological optimism does not begin with immediate knowledge and the indubitability of self-knowledge but rather culminates with it—as is made clear when he ends the section with a recapitulation of Suhrawardī's famous axiom that every immaterial thing in its epistemic activity engages the identity thesis (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 260).

29.5. On the Existence of God

Proofs for the existence of the Necessary Being (*al-wujūd al-wājibī*) are abundantly many (*kathīra mutakāthira*) (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 268; Lawātī 2001).[5] One proof in particular, however, attempts to establish His existence from the point of view of existence itself (a sort of ontological proof). This is the most veracious and indubitable of proofs, which the philosophers call the Proof of the Veracious (*burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*) (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 269; Miṣbāḥ-i Yazdī, *Taʿlīqa*, 405–14). In the view of Avicenna, the first philosopher to formulate it, the proof is based on a priori assumptions and rests thus on purely ontological considerations. Ṭabāṭabāʾī preferred, however, to rework this view and present Mullā Ṣadrā's version, found in the *Asfār*. The reason for this is obvious. Avicenna did not discuss the theory of *aṣālat al-wujūd* in his philosophical works; however, Mullā Ṣadrā did. The proof in question is, after all, an exercise in ontology and, in Ṭabāṭabāʾī's view, perfectly concordant with Mullā Ṣadrā's paradigm of the primacy of existence.

As for the proof itself, Ṭabāṭabāʾī's presentation may be summarized as follows. Existence is a simple, singular, and extramental reality (*ḥaqīqa ʿayniyya wāḥida baṣīṭa*). The difference between its unique individuals (*afrād*) is determined by intensity, diminution, perfection, and privation. The most complete of them is an existent that is independent of other existents. No other existent can attain its completeness and existential perfection. This is because the rest of the existents are incomplete and contingent and are thus dependent on the complete and independent existent. An existent whose essence is complete exists for itself; it is called the Necessary Existent. The rest of existents are called contingent existents, characterized primarily by indigence. All contingent existents have their source of perfection in the Necessary Existent. Thus, existence is one of two types: complete and pure or impoverished and attached to substance. So in the end, we conclude that the Necessary Existent exists (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 269–72). Concomitant to this is the Avicennan-inspired insistence (against the theologians) on the simple unity of the divine against any form of composition or multiplicity either mentally posited or real (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 275–77). The plenitude of the simple one is then related to the Sadrian principle that the simple reality (following the simple intellect of the Neoplatonic tradition) encompasses everything.

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[5] Lawātī 2001 is one of the best analyses of proofs for the existence of God in Islamic philosophy culminating with the discussions of Mullā Ṣadrā and Ṭabāṭabāʾī.

Ṭabāṭabāʾī seems consistent with the Avicennan tradition in considering the culmination of metaphysics to be the proof of God through the focused contemplation of His existence. Thus it is not contingency or teleology that led one to God. His very brief discussion of the problem of the incipience of the cosmos (*ḥudūth al-ʿālam*) does not directly consider God's creative agency—that comes later in the theology—but he does, consistent with the Sadrian tradition, criticize the argument for the eternity and mere logical posteriority of the cosmos and also mentions Mīr Dāmād's theory of perpetual creation and then dismisses it (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 230–34). Consistent with the Avicennan tradition of texts on the affirmation of the existence of God (*ithbāt al-wājib*), his presentation of divine power and will are directly collated and active upon the cosmos, embracing the plenitude of all that exists (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 296–308). He reiterates the optimistic theodicy of God creating the cosmos as the best of all possible worlds due to the very nature of divine providence acting to ensure this—and that follows Mullā Ṣadrā closely (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 308–13). The text culminates with a return to the question of creation and the sustenance of the cosmos. He reaffirms the creation in time of the material universe while insisting upon the creation outside of time for the immaterial—since he allows for the Platonic distinction between three realms of matter, intellect, and forms, of which only the first is created in time (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāya*, 322–26). Time cannot be separated from material existence—and hence the assertion by Ṭabāṭabāʾī that time is a fourth dimension and coeval with the activity of the divine that has no beginning. He concludes with the permanence, the eternity in the past, and future of the divine emanation of grace and mercy that sustains all and hence reaffirms the need for the creator in the first place (*Nihāya*, 326). Because divine power is the basis for every act of bringing into being and causality for all that is, and is simultaneously identical to the divine essence as an essential property of the divine, God must have always been involved in the world process. Thus we can see how Ṭabāṭabāʾī's philosophy is geared toward the affirmation of God the creator and sustainer of the cosmos and provides the necessary intellectual rigor to bolster theology in the modern age.

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CHAPTER 30

ZAKĪ NAJĪB MAḤMŪD (D. 1993), *NAḤWA FALSAFA ʿILMIYYA* (*TOWARD A SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY*)

MUHAMMAD ALI KHALIDI

Zakī Najīb Maḥmūd (1905–1993) occupies a unique and anomalous position in the development of twentieth-century Arab thought, as a self-styled follower of logical empiricism and the emerging analytic school of philosophy. The task of explicating and promoting the philosophical ideas of logical empiricism to an Arab audience dominated his early work. This included a critique of previous metaphysical philosophy, an adherence to empiricism and conceptual analysis, and a conception of philosophy as an underlaborer to the sciences. However, in his later work, he addressed some of the issues that preoccupied other Arab thinkers of his era, notably the possibility of reconciling tradition and modernity, the compatibility of Islamic religious thought with liberalism and democracy, and general questions of progress, secularism, and the state of Arab and Egyptian society.

In this chapter, I will begin with a brief biographical sketch, attempting to relate some of the particulars of Maḥmūd's life in such a way as to shed light on his philosophical output. Then I will take a closer look at the main themes of the text that is the focus of this chapter, *Naḥwa Falsafa ʿIlmiyya* (*Toward a Scientific Philosophy*), a work that propounds and defends logical empiricism, engaging with its principal arguments and relating it to the work of others. Finally, I will attempt to provide an assessment of his work and its place in twentieth-century Arab thought.

30.1. Life and Work

The life of Zakī Najīb Maḥmūd spanned almost the entire twentieth century, and it straddled the period of British occupation, the Egyptian monarchy, the revolution of

1952, and the regimes of Presidents Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, Anwar al-Sādāt, and Ḥusnī Mubārak. Born to a middle-class family in the governorate of Dumyāt (Damietta) on the Mediterranean coast, he moved to Cairo with his family in early childhood. He received his schooling in Cairo as well as at Gordon Memorial College in Khartoum, where his father was employed as a civil servant by the government of Sudan. Returning to Cairo in the early 1920s, he graduated from secondary school and enrolled in university at a teachers training college. Though he attended university courses covering both Western and Arab-Islamic civilization, he recounts that his experiences in the two sets of courses were starkly different. He was thrilled that a professor of English literature could spend an entire lecture interpreting a single line from Wordsworth, "I wandered lonely as a cloud." But he was despondent to find that lectures on pre-Islamic (Jāhilī) poetry were dry and indigestible by comparison (Maḥmūd, *Afkār*, 6–7). While at university, Maḥmūd read in the work of Salama Mūsā that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal had defied the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Maʾmūn's position on the status of the Qurʾān, insisting against the Muʿtazilites that it was eternal, not created in time, and that he suffered for upholding his doctrinal position. Admiring this principled stance, he asked his Islamic history professor about the episode but was promptly told to leave the classroom (Maḥmūd, *Afkār*, 15). These and other pedagogical experiences apparently led him to focus his intellectual energies almost entirely on studying the Western literary and philosophical traditions, doing so mostly on his own while at university and in subsequent years.

Shortly after graduating from university, he was commissioned by renowned literary critic and editor Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt to write articles for the influential literary journal that he edited, *al-Risāla*. Zayyāt's writings and translations were an important early influence, especially translations of Goethe and Lamartine, and Maḥmūd rose enthusiastically to the challenge. He wrote essays on such figures as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Bergson, which drew the attention of other prominent figures in Egyptian intellectual circles (Maḥmūd, *Afkār*, 21). In 1934, Aḥmad Amīn, the writer and historian who headed Lajnat al-Taʾlīf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr (Committee for Composition, Translation, and Publication), which aimed to produce and disseminate books that would help educate the Egyptian public, commissioned Maḥmūd to write a history of philosophy. Maḥmūd produced three volumes, which he admits relied on W. T. Stace's *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy* and Will Durant's *The Story of Philosophy*. One of the challenges he faced was in finding Arabic equivalents for some of the terms in use in modern Western philosophy, and he reports that many of the expressions he coined for the purpose of these volumes remained in wide usage in subsequent work by other Arab writers. During this period of his life, in the early 1930s, when Maḥmūd was in his late twenties and early thirties, he describes himself as being highly impressionable, changing his views as some caterpillars change color depending on background foliage. He evidently came under the influence of many successive philosophical figures and movements as he wrote popular accounts of them for a wider Arab public, and this led to something of an intellectual crisis. In later life, he compared himself during this phase to al-Ghazālī, whose skeptical doubts obliged him to leave Baghdad to cure himself of his intellectual disease (Maḥmūd, *Afkār*, 22–25).

For Maḥmūd, the chance to leave Cairo eventually came in the form of a government-sponsored scholarship to study for a doctorate in philosophy at King's College, London University. He traveled to London in 1944 and chose to work with H. F. Hallett, a philosopher with diverse interests, especially known for his work on Spinoza. His doctoral dissertation was on the concept of personal self-determination in the context of the free will debate, and was strongly influenced by Bergson, as well as by the existentialist and pragmatist schools of philosophy. But Maḥmūd relates that he experienced something of a Damascene conversion in the midst of his doctoral studies, with the appointment of A. J. Ayer to a professorship at University College, London, in 1946. On hearing of his appointment, he decided to read Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* in preparation for attending his inaugural lecture and was immediately taken with the approach of logical empiricism (Maḥmūd, *Afkār*, 31–36). Apparently, it was too late to change the course of his research, for he saw his dissertation project to fruition, but from then onward he regarded logical empiricism as the correct philosophical approach. It is perhaps revealing that he persevered with his original research topic despite coming under the influence of Ayer, since the adoption of a logical empiricist framework would presumably have led him to regard traditional approaches to the free will debate as empty metaphysical speculation.

On returning to Egypt, Maḥmūd took up an academic position at Cairo University and embarked on a writing career that would stretch over four decades. One of his first philosophical works, *al-Manṭiq al-waḍʿī* (*The Positivist Logic*), was devoted to logic and related philosophical matters, such as the nature of definition. The two-volume work was first published in 1951, and it bore the clear influence of logical empiricism and the writings of Ayer, as well as Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, and other figures in the analytic movement in philosophy. Two years later, in 1953, he published *Khurāfat al-Mītāfīzīqā* (*The Myth of Metaphysics*), in which he paid particular attention to the work of Russell, Moore, and Carnap, devoting a chapter to each. But before introducing the reader to these figures, he defended the logical empiricist view that most of the statements of traditional metaphysics, being unverifiable by experience, were literally devoid of meaning. Instead of trying to make factual statements that are not based on actual experience, philosophers should restrict themselves to analyzing the empirically based concepts of science (as well as those of everyday life):

> The philosopher ought not to pronounce a single sentence that attempts to describe the universe or any part of it, for his entire mission consists in analyzing the expressions uttered by scientists in the course of their research or by ordinary people in the course of their daily lives, in such a way as to reveal the hidden [meanings] of those expressions, so that we can be assured of the soundness of their statements. It is an utter travesty for the philosopher to sit in an armchair in the comfort of his home, with his head resting on his palms, claiming to us and to himself that he is pondering the reality of the world. (Maḥmūd, *Khurāfat*, 5)

The work earned considerable criticism for its denial of factual content to any statement that was not empirically verifiable. Maḥmūd does not seem to have been prepared for the negative reaction it provoked, but he did not try to soften his views as a result. Undeterred, he reissued the work three decades later under a different title, *Mawqif fī l-Mītāfīzīqā* (*A Stance towards Metaphysics*), in the optimistic conviction that the new title would lead his critics to regard it "more objectively" (Maḥmūd, *Mawqif*). The same antimetaphysical stance was upheld in *Naḥwa Falsafa ʿIlmiyya* (*Towards a Scientific Philosophy*), first published in 1958 (and reissued in 1980), which will be discussed in the next section.

Though much of his early work (roughly between 1950 and 1970) was focused on explicating and defending the claims and methods of the logical empiricists, Maḥmūd began in the late 1960s and early 1970s to engage gradually with the ideas and debates that preoccupied many other Arab intellectual figures of this period. This change in direction in his philosophical work and intellectual orientation is noted in several different places in essays of a personal or autobiographical nature. As he puts it in the introduction to one of his first publications in this new vein, *The Renewal of Arab Thought* (*Tajdīd al-Fikr al-ʿArabī*), published in 1971:

> The writer of these pages did not have the leisure in years past to peruse volumes from our Arab heritage, for he is one of thousands of Arab intellectuals whose eyes were opened [only] to European thought—both ancient and modern—to the point that they hastened to conclude that it was identical to human thought and that there was no other thought. Nothing else had been put before their eyes. (Maḥmūd, *Tajdīd*, 5)

Later in life, he would observe in the introduction to the aptly named monograph *ʿArabī bayna Thaqāfatayn* (*An Arab between Two Cultures*) that he realized by the time he reached middle age that he had exclusively studied the civilization of the West, reading Arabic literature on the side, mainly poetry (Maḥmūd, *ʿArabī*, 5–6). Writing of himself in the third person, he noted drily: "He became somewhat concerned by a certain imbalance in his cultural formation" (Maḥmūd, *ʿArabī*, 6).

One should not get the impression that Maḥmūd was completely alienated from his own cultural and political milieu prior to middle age. Among his early writings were essays commenting either directly or obliquely on the state of Egyptian society under the monarchy, prior to the revolution of 1952. In a collection of articles first published in 1947, he laments the hierarchical nature of Egyptian society, the slavish mindset of many of his compatriots, and the general decline of Arab civilization (Maḥmūd, *Jannat*). In another collection, *Wa-l-Thawra ʿalā l-Abwāb* (*On the Threshold of Revolution*), written in the year prior to the revolution but published afterward, he writes a satirical and allegorical essay about intellectuals debating the interests of the "people" on a pristine mountaintop while oblivious of their real plight at the base of the mountain below (Maḥmūd, *Thawra*). However, even though Maḥmūd was mindful of the context in which he lived and wrote, he seemed in the first half of his intellectual life to be both relatively unaware of the details of the Arab-Islamic intellectual tradition and to believe in a clean break with past mores and values. This is how he put it in a collection of essays published in 1967:

> The writer of these pages remained, for a long portion of his life, on the path of those who have faith in modern science alone, spurning all that was inherited and ancient. He has now changed his point of view, finding that it is utterly impossible to create a distinctive and unique character—be it the character of an individual or that of an entire nation—by means of modern science alone. The distinctiveness must come from other features. (Maḥmūd, *Wajhat*, viii)

He goes on to explain that these features and values must come from the past, since they are not invented on a regular basis in the course of human history and cannot just be refashioned at will. Moreover, he argues that this is what ensures continuity in a nation. Thus, by his own admission, Maḥmūd initially regarded the Arab-Islamic cultural, religious, and philosophical heritage as somewhat obsolete and out of step with the modern world, and did not make an effort to become thoroughly acquainted with it. However, he reacted against this attitude by the late 1960s, and in his later work, he aimed largely to effect a reconciliation of this heritage with some of the main features of modern Western civilization, including the intellectual virtues of modern scientific inquiry and the political and social values of liberal democracy.

While engaging more directly with Arab-Islamic civilization, Maḥmūd continued to argue for the necessity of embracing modernity and science. In more than one place, he laments the fact that Western culture also happens to be the culture of the Arab world's imperialist aggressors, and that throwing off the yoke of colonialism has led some to reject Western civilization altogether. Instead, he calls on his fellow Arabs and Muslims to learn a lesson from their predecessors, who picked and chose from among the elements of both Jāhilī and Greek cultures (Maḥmūd, *Afkār*, 184–85). Rather than absolute acceptance or complete rejection, he advocates an eclectic attitude in attempting to reconcile his own cultural heritage with modern developments in science, politics, and culture. But in calling for reconciliation between that heritage and Western modernity, Maḥmūd sometimes evinces a rather simplistic view of the Arab-Islamic tradition. Among the retarding factors that he identifies in Arab-Islamic civilization are the alleged facts that the ruler in history was also the shaper of people's opinions, that ancient thought was endlessly repeated rather than interpreted, and that humans were thought to be able to negate natural laws (Maḥmūd, *Tajdīd*, 27). These and other broad pronouncements on Arab-Islamic history are not adequately justified, and they verge on a kind of cultural essentialism. Maḥmūd also espouses a rather extreme form of linguistic determinism in diagnosing the problems of the Arab world and in advocating solutions. For instance, he states in various places that the Arabic language is part of the reason for lack of progress in Arab societies and argues that the process of cultural renewal should start with a revolution in language (Maḥmūd, *Tajdīd*, 205 ff.). He contends, for example, that the concept of *reality* (*al-wāqiʿ*) is devalued in Arab culture due to the etymology of the word, since it is derived from *wuqūʿ* (falling or descent), resulting in contempt for the concept of reality (Maḥmūd, *Afkār*, 189). Even though Maḥmūd claims to have made an effort in the second half of his philosophical career to engage with the Arab-Islamic tradition and to approach modernity with that past in mind, the verdicts he reaches too often indicate a rather superficial engagement with tradition.

30.2. *Naḥwa Falsafa ʿIlmiyya*

The work under consideration is strongly influenced by the philosophical movement known as "logical positivism" or "logical empiricism," though many other influences are also evident, including perhaps most prominently, Hume, Comte, Bradley, Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein. There are also passing references in the text to a range of other philosophers, notably Kant and Hegel, but for the most part the treatment of these and other historical figures is rather cursory and geared toward demonstrating the problematic nature of traditional metaphysics and the superiority of the logical empiricist position on various philosophical issues.

Though the terms are often used interchangeably, "logical positivism" and "logical empiricism" sometimes connote a subtle shift in the philosophical movement that originated in the Vienna Circle. While "logical positivism" is often associated with some of the more extreme doctrines that were prevalent in the early years of the movement, "logical empiricism" usually refers to a more mature philosophical position that tempered and modified many of those earlier claims. The label "positivism" is also considered misleading since it suggests an affinity with the philosophy of Auguste Comte, whose philosophical doctrines were not widely shared by proponents of the movement (though Maḥmūd includes a brief discussion of Comte's views in this work). By contrast, "empiricism" is more accurate since it signals a more direct relationship to the positions of the British empiricists, particularly Hume, who was indeed a strong influence on the movement.

The Vienna Circle was a group of philosophers that met in the Austrian capital between 1924 and 1936, many of whom had been trained in the natural and social sciences. Among its most prominent figures were Moritz Schlick, Otto Neurath, Hans Reichenbach, Rudolf Carnap, and Herbert Feigl. But the Vienna Circle had an influence that extended far beyond the group of philosophers who actually met in Vienna. One early offshoot of the group was the Berlin Society for Empirical Philosophy, which was founded by Reichenbach on his move to Berlin in 1926. Some members of the group were forced to emigrate to the United States in the 1930s due to the rise of anti-Semitism and attitudes of anti-intellectualism in the run-up to the Second World War. This meant that their ideas circulated widely in US academia, where both Carnap and Reichenbach went on to have influential careers. In addition to Ayer, who disseminated their doctrines in Britain and the English-speaking world, visitors to the Vienna Circle included the American philosophers W. V. Quine and Ernest Nagel, as well as the Polish logician Alfred Tarski, all of whom were influenced by their ideas and spread that influence further afield. Even though many of the original doctrines of the Vienna Circle have been transformed beyond recognition, logical empiricism is unquestionably one of the main sources for the development of contemporary analytic philosophy (for a brief account of the Vienna Circle, see Uebel 2011).

After coming under the influence of Ayer and his writings, Maḥmūd was almost single-handedly responsible for transmitting the ideas of the Vienna Circle and logical empiricism to the Arab world. In this and other works, he self-consciously identifies as a member of a philosophical movement, with such phrases as "we, the logical empiricists" (alternatively, "scientific empiricists" or "logical positivists"). He seldom departs from standard logical empiricist views, but he conveys them in an accessible and attractive manner. The text is written throughout in a fluid and readable style, but the treatment is not always systematic, and certain ideas are sometimes reintroduced in two or three different places, without sufficient cross-references between the chapters. In addition to Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936; 2nd ed., 1946), the logical empiricist work that seems to have served as an inspiration for Maḥmūd's text is Reichenbach's accessible late work, *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (1951), even down to its title and some of its chapter headings. But though there are definite echoes of the latter work (and occasional explicit references to it) in Maḥmūd's text, it is only loosely related to it in terms of its main themes and arguments. In what follows, I will attempt to explicate what I take to be some of the central positions of the text, examining the justifications provided for them and raising some objections to them.

30.2.1. The Analytic-Synthetic Distinction

Among the main themes of the text is the distinction between analytic (*taḥlīlī*) and synthetic (*tarkībī*) statements or propositions, and the denial of the synthetic a priori. The distinction between analytic statements, whose truth depends solely on the meanings of their words, and synthetic statements, whose truth depends also on empirical facts, was a central tenet of logical empiricism (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 35). In an analytic statement, the subject is defined by the predicate, or more generally, some of the words that enter into the statement define the other words in the statement. Thus, the truth of the statement turns merely on the meanings of the words involved. Such statements can be justified without recourse to experience and are hence a priori (*qablī*). By contrast, synthetic statements depend not just on the meanings of the words involved, but also on facts about the world. As such, they can only be justified with reference to relevant experiences, which means that they are a posteriori (*baʿdī*) (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 168). Kant famously asserted that there could be statements, notably those of mathematics, that are both synthetic and a priori, but Maḥmūd, along with the logical empiricists, rejects this claim and with it the notion that reason alone can be the source of truths about the world.

For Maḥmūd, analytic statements are a priori because they are tautologous (*tikrārī*). Their a priori nature is trivial since they merely serve as definitions that provide the meanings of terms, such as "A puppy is a young dog." In this and other similar cases, there is no need to carry out an investigation into the natural world to verify the truth of the statement; it can be justified "prior" to experience, since it is a matter of defining a particular term (in this case, "puppy") (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 35). Similarly, the statements of mathematics are analytic since they define certain terms and draw out the deductive consequences of those definitions; the conclusions in mathematics repeat what is already contained in the premises. For example, "A triangle is a three-sided plane figure" is an analytic statement that provides the definition of the term "triangle," and hence its a priori status is trivial. Once such a term and other terms are defined, mathematicians can then deduce certain nonobvious consequences, for example, that the sum of the internal angles of all triangles is equivalent to two right angles. Such consequences may not seem trivial, yet they follow by deductive logic from mathematical definitions and are therefore also analytic and tautologous. They do not depend for their truth on the natural world (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, viii).

Like many logical empiricists, Maḥmūd also regards mathematics as an extension of logic, being derivable from it. According to this "logicist" program, which predates logical empiricism, mathematics is deducible ultimately from the axioms and theorems of logic. Even though the theorems of arithmetic or geometry may not seem obvious, they are merely the deductive consequences of the truths of logic along with certain definitions. Since the truths of logic are themselves tautologous and analytic, Maḥmūd denies that reason can be the source of nontrivial a priori knowledge. For example, the law of noncontradiction and the law of the excluded middle are simply definitions of logical connectives such as "not," "and," "or," and "if . . . then." The linguistic structures of logic and pure mathematics do not refer to reality, but are self-consistent symbolic structures. As he puts it, "Logic and mathematics are both extensions of a single intellectual structure, consisting of analytic propositions that are deduced from one another but do not refer to the facts of natural existence (*ḥaqāʾiq al-wujūd al-ṭabīʿī*)" (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 52, cf. 138). The failure to distinguish logic and mathematics from empirical science and to understand the differences between them is a common mistake in the history of philosophy, affecting both rationalists like Descartes and empiricists like Mill (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 159, 120).

Maḥmūd also argues that the Kantian position on Euclidean geometry has been rendered untenable by modern science, particularly the theory of general relativity. Even though Kant considered the axioms of Euclidean geometry to be both synthetic and knowable a priori, twentieth-century physics has discovered that these axioms are simply false as descriptions of space, at least over large distances such as the distance from the earth to the sun (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 176). Hence, they are not a priori but are every bit as falsifiable as the empirical statements of natural science. But this criticism leads to a difficulty in Maḥmūd's position that he does not address adequately in this work. If the axioms of geometry are falsifiable by empirical discoveries, then they must contain some empirical content, but then they cannot be purely analytic or tautologous. One might try to resolve this apparent inconsistency (as he suggests very briefly) by distinguishing pure and applied geometry (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 176). Pure geometry, it could be said, is a consistent axiomatic structure that is both a priori and analytic, but it does not purport to refer to natural phenomena, while applied geometry aims to describe the natural world and is therefore both a posteriori and synthetic. But a strict division is difficult to maintain between pure and applied geometry, or more generally, between two types of mathematical discourse. Moreover, as Reichenbach suggested, even the laws of logic are not immune to revision since there are legitimate proposals to alter the law of the excluded middle in order to better describe certain phenomena in quantum physics (Reichenbach 1951, 188–90). This type of critique of the analytic-synthetic distinction, later driven home most forcefully by Quine, led many philosophers to reject the distinction in due course and to deny that there are any statements that are entirely devoid of empirical content (for the locus classicus, see Quine 1951, 20–43). If the axioms of mathematics, and indeed the axioms of logic, are not immune to revision based on experience, then there are no pure analytic statements. Eventually, some of the logical empiricists came to view the laws of logic and mathematics as conventions, with different conventions leading to different formulations of empirical laws. This move blurs the line between pure definitions and statements with empirical content and makes it increasingly difficult to maintain a strict distinction between analytic and synthetic statements. In the final chapter of the text, in a discussion influenced by Reichenbach, Maḥmūd acknowledges that our description of space is in part empirical and in part conventional, but he does not grapple with the implications of this admission for the analytic-synthetic distinction (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 353). It appears that he may not have been aware of the critiques of analyticity, which had already begun to appear at the time this book was being written.

30.2.2. The Verifiability Criterion of Meaning

Another important plank of logical empiricism, alongside the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements, is the criterion of meaning for synthetic statements. The logical empiricists proposed, and Maḥmūd concurred, that the meaning of a synthetic statement was its means of verification:

> The meaning of a statement is identical to its means of verification, for if we cannot find a means of verifying it, it is a meaningless statement. This is the principle on the basis of which we reject all metaphysical statements, for we search for a means of verifying these statements but do not find any. (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 274)

When confronted with any synthetic statement, we should first ask which sensory experiences would serve to verify it. If none would, we should eliminate it as meaningless; if there are such experiences, then we can proceed to determine whether it is true or false. Maḥmūd goes on to explain that it is sufficient that a statement be verifiable in principle though not in practice. Statements about the far side of the moon are not to be dismissed as meaningless on the grounds that they cannot be verified (at least at the time he was writing), just as long as they are verifiable in principle (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 273–75).

Even when modified in this way, the verifiability criterion of meaning was open to objections, at least some of which Maḥmūd discusses explicitly. Perhaps most notoriously, critics raised a question about the status of the verifiability principle itself: was it verifiable? If so, what are the experiences that would verify it, and if not, does that make it meaningless? Maḥmūd attributes the objection to Russell, and in responding to it takes a leaf from Russell's own philosophical work. In order to resolve certain logical and set-theoretic paradoxes, Russell had proposed a "theory of types," which classified statements into a strict hierarchy. At the first level are statements about individuals, at the second level statements about sets, at the third level statements about sets of sets, and so on. To resolve the paradoxes, all of which involve self-referentiality, one needs to distinguish these levels or types and to segregate statements of one type from statements of another. In a similar fashion, Maḥmūd proposes that the statement of the verifiability principle belongs to a different type from first-order empirical statements; as such, it does not apply to itself. To apply it to itself would be to confuse the first-order language with the metalanguage (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 277–78). Even if one accepts this reply to the objection, the worry may remain that Maḥmūd does not directly justify the verifiability principle on independent grounds. The closest he comes to doing so is in considering the objection that it may be deemed preferable to reject the principle rather than eliminate almost the entirety of metaphysics, which is the most hallowed part of philosophy. His response is that the verifiability principle is an obvious standard for meaning, since a sentence could not indicate anything at all unless it referred to aspects of experience (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 275). This response suggests that he thinks the principle is analytic, providing a definition of the term *meaning* itself, though he does not say so explicitly.

Another objection to the verifiability principle, which he also attributes to Russell, is the problem of universal generalizations, such as the statements of natural law that one finds in the sciences, for example, "Gases decrease in volume with an increase in pressure." Such statements cannot be definitively verified, since they refer to a potentially infinite number of particulars. As Hume argued, no matter how many times we have observed such phenomena in the past, it is always an open question as to whether they will continue to obtain in the future (or indeed, have applied to unobserved instances in the past). Hence, such statements are never completely verifiable even in principle. But Maḥmūd responds that the aim is not to verify a statement with certainty, merely with a high degree of probability. This degree of probability "is sufficient by itself to judge the correctness of the sentence and to state that it is a meaningful sentence" (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 276).

Even before he introduces it explicitly, Maḥmūd demonstrates how the verifiability principle can be used to dispense with statements in traditional metaphysics or "speculative philosophy" (*al-falsafa al-taʾammuliyya*). Following Reichenbach and Carnap, a frequent metaphysical target in this regard is Hegel, and Maḥmūd derives evident satisfaction in showing the meaninglessness of such Hegelian pronouncements as, "Reason is the substance from which all things derive their being." He imagines an empirically minded scientist querying this statement as follows:

> What experiment might I conduct to verify this statement with certainty? In other words, what could I see with my eyes, or hear with my ears, for example, in this tree that would enable me to say afterward that its substance is "reason" and that it derives its being from "reason"? (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 4–5; cf. Reichenbach 1951, 3–4)

Since there are no such experiences that might verify the statement or falsify it, it is safe to conclude that the philosopher who makes it is "closer to a poet than a scientist," the crucial difference being that the philosopher claims to be making literal descriptive statements rather than figurative ones (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 5–6).

As for mundane statements derived from ordinary discourse, Maḥmūd acknowledges that many of them are not *directly* verifiable, but rather indirectly verifiable. For example, he asks us to consider the sentence "The civilization of the West is scientific" (*madaniyyat al-gharb ʿilmiyya*). He points out that the elements of this sentence refer to millions of particulars, including books, paintings, sculptures, and other cultural artifacts, and it does not have a direct meaning since it does not refer to a single verifiable fact. It does not have a meaning until it is converted to simpler sentences each of which concerns a single particular that can be examined by the senses (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 130–31). Presumably, the same applies to many other statements that are made in the course of nonscientific discourse.

30.2.3. Certainty, Necessity, and Science

The distinction between analytic and synthetic statements leads to a strict separation between mathematics and natural science. As we have seen, the former is held to be analytic and void of empirical content, while the latter is synthetic and contains verifiable information about the natural world. Moreover, the susceptibility of synthetic statements to empirical verification and falsification comes with a price, since it means that the statements of science never achieve certainty but are always held with a degree of probability. The quest for certainty in natural science is misguided. It has misled some philosophers (such as Plato) into devaluing natural science because it does not achieve the certainty associated with mathematics, and misled others (such as Kant) into seeking a way of achieving certainty in the natural sciences (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 163, 208). Rather than searching for certainty, philosophers must realize that empirical knowledge is based on induction and therefore always comes with degrees of probability. Maḥmūd points out that this has spurred some philosophers, including some logical empiricists, to develop an inductive logic, which would enable us to confer a definite degree of probability on the laws and generalizations of empirical science. But he rejects these attempts on the grounds that not all probabilities can be given a definite value, though he does not further justify this claim (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 214–15).

A related error made by major figures in the history of philosophy is to imbue the laws of nature with a necessity that is simply not found in the natural world. Laws of nature, such as "Gases decrease in volume with an increase in pressure," are not necessary truths, as many philosophers have held. That is because there is no necessary connection, as Hume showed, between cause and effect. Hence, there is no necessity associated with natural laws, and their negation is not self-contradictory. Maḥmūd attempts to diagnose the tendency of rationalist philosophers to imbue causation with necessity and to regard the causal laws of the sciences as necessary propositions. He says that the rationalists transfer the logical necessity that obtains between the statement of a law and its deductive consequences to the law itself. That is, they observe rightly that the statement of the general law about gases leads necessarily to the particular conclusion that the gas in this particular container decreased in volume when the pressure increased, but they conclude wrongly that the statement of the law itself is necessarily true. There is a relation of logical necessity between a general premise and a particular conclusion that follows deductively from it, but that is not to say that the premise itself is somehow necessary (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 292–309). Moreover, Maḥmūd speculates that the projection of necessity onto nature may reflect a need to suppose that there is a mind controlling the universe:

> Perhaps what tempts the rationalist philosopher into making this addition [of necessity] is handing over the reins of the universe to a "mind" that controls it as it likes, for if the regular occurrence of two successive phenomena is a necessary occurrence and is necessarily true, then this necessity must have a necessitator (*mūjib*), and this necessity would have a mind that has laid down laws (*sunan*) that it has no choice but to follow. (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 304)

However, he maintains that contrary to what many traditional philosophers have argued, the propositions of empirical science are neither metaphysically necessary nor epistemically certain.

With empirical verifiability comes the need for precision and the imperative to quantify statements in order for them to be genuinely testable. Maḥmūd observes that quantitative methods are ubiquitous in modern natural science and that the social sciences must follow suit. For example, the statement "Some Egyptians are poor" is not a scientific statement. To transform it into a testable scientific statement, the researcher must specify the exact proportion of Egyptians who are poor and indicate the annual income level that would define poverty (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 326–27). Qualitative statements must be translated into quantitative statements for the sciences to progress, and such advances have now been made in biology as well as psychology. He mentions behaviorism in psychology, in particular, as a movement that attempts to observe the outward behavioral signs of mental capacities and considers these behaviors to be quantifiable (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 340–41). In response to the objection that human traits cannot be quantified, Maḥmūd responds that prominent historical figures in philosophy, including Plato and Aristotle, have indeed tried to quantify human character traits and other aspects of the human and social domain. But it is not clear that the type of quantization attempted by these and other philosophers is closely related to that advocated by Maḥmūd. Moreover, citing these precedents hardly vindicates the possibility of quantifying human and social phenomena, since few would now claim that their efforts in this regard were successful. Finally, he recognizes that this drive for quantifying the social sciences and the human realm leads to an adverse reaction among the lay public and even among some scientists, since humans are supposed to have spirits that cannot be weighed or measured. But Maḥmūd retorts that these same people contradict themselves since they believe that humans are held to account on the Day of Judgment, when their good and evil deeds are put in the balance (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 317).

30.2.4. Conceptual Analysis and the Role of Philosophy

How does philosophy figure in the division of meaningful statements into analytic and synthetic, and the application of the verifiability principle? We have already seen that traditional metaphysics is eliminated on this logical empiricist account. But what role is left for philosophy in general? Philosophy cannot aspire to make empirical discoveries, since that is the domain of the sciences, both natural and social. After making this very clear, Maḥmūd adds that the proper function of philosophy is to aid science by defining scientific concepts with precision and in empirical terms. The role of the philosopher is not to undertake original scientific research but to analyze those scientific concepts that have been left unanalyzed, especially those that are problematic or controversial. But this leads immediately to the following objection: Why not leave this task of conceptual analysis to the scientists themselves? In response, he acknowledges that this would be preferable and is anyway what occurs in most instances, but that this is not always the case, and that the analysis of meanings or concepts requires certain logical skills different from those usually associated with scientific research. As for what is meant by "analysis" in this context, Maḥmūd allows that it may not be possible to specify it with precision, but says that all instances of analysis are united by a kind of family resemblance (thus relying on an idea often associated with Wittgenstein). Presumably, he means that there are no necessary and sufficient conditions that can be associated with the concept of philosophical analysis, but that there is a loose cluster of attributes that accompany the analytic method, though he does not attempt to list some of these features (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 7–13).

One question on which Maḥmūd seems to equivocate has to do with whether this method should also be applied to ordinary language. Partly under the influence of logical positivism, some philosophers (notably J. L. Austin and Gilbert Ryle) undertook an investigation of everyday discourse, devoting themselves mainly to the analysis of concepts drawn from ordinary language. But most of the logical positivists themselves regarded these efforts to analyze common discourse as misguided, since they held that ordinary language is imprecise and riddled with errors. Maḥmūd appears to concur and explicitly distances himself from the preoccupation with ordinary language, at least in some passages: "The task of philosophy according to the proponents of logical positivism is the analysis of expressions and utterances with respect to their general logical structure, not with respect to their manners of use in any particular language" (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 66). But on some occasions in this work and elsewhere, Maḥmūd seems to allow that ordinary language might also be profitably analyzed using this method (see, e.g., *Khurāfat*, 5). He refers to philosophy as the "science of 'meaning'" and writes that "we seek an inquiry that examines the logic of language insofar as it is an instrument that describes our ways of conducting ourselves in the world in which we live" (*Naḥwa*, 117, 126). This suggests that it may be useful to investigate ordinary language, but the examples that he puts forward to support the view mostly illustrate the claim that the surface structure of language is often misleading and distorts reality. For instance, the subject-predicate structure of many ordinary statements (e.g., "Roses are red") encourages us wrongly to think that properties (e.g., "redness") are separate from the objects that possess those properties. General terms also mislead us into thinking that there are universals corresponding to them, whereas in reality there are only concrete particulars that are similar in certain respects (a position associated with nominalism in the history of philosophy). The sentence "Roses are red" is not directly verifiable but must first be translated into many sentences that refer to particulars, of the type "This rose is red." In addition, in ordinary language there are many empty terms, such as *jinn*, and hence the structure of a sentence such as "The jinn are red" is very different from the sentence "Roses are red" (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 92, 135). Clearly, then, analyzing ordinary language has the effect mainly of pointing out its shortcomings and distortions.

Thus, for Maḥmūd, philosophical analysis consists primarily in constructing definitions of the terms of science. Though this task may strike some as unduly restrictive, the idea of philosophy as a close ally, if not a junior partner, of the scientific enterprise is certainly not unique to the logical empiricists and is one that would sit well with a range of figures in the history of philosophy. It is also a task that has occupied many philosophers since the second half of the twentieth century, as philosophers have often joined forces with scientists in analyzing problematic concepts drawn from a range of sciences. But there are two questions that are raised by this conception of philosophy that might have merited further discussion. First, on this account, it is difficult to maintain, as Maḥmūd does, that philosophers should not interfere in the scientific enterprise: "I repeat that we do not intend in scientific philosophy to participate with scientists in their research; rather [philosophy] is scientific in that it is primarily concerned with analyzing the propositions of science, and it has succeeded through analysis in achieving significant and far-reaching results" (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, ix). He also insists:

> In this book, we do not intend to wear the garb of scientists, and to pursue the business of the natural scientist or psychologist; what we intend to establish firmly is that any linguistic expression that contains one or more words that cannot yet be translated into the language of equations and numbers is an expression that does not have a meaning that can be discussed and debated by researchers. (*Naḥwa*, 341)

Since the kind of clarificatory enterprise that he advocates is likely to lead to some scientific concepts being found incoherent, improperly defined, equivocal, and so on, it would appear that this would inevitably lead philosophers to interfere in science. If, as he also puts it, philosophers receive from scientists their first principles, and analyze them to uncover hidden assumptions, then there is certainly a potential for overlap in the functions of scientists and philosophers (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 336). Second, Maḥmūd also insists that as sciences mature and become quantitative, they split off from philosophy, as astronomy, chemistry, and zoology have done, and as psychology and sociology are in the process of doing (*Naḥwa*, 315). But this seems to lead to the conclusion that philosophy will eventually be made redundant and will not have any function left to serve. Perhaps he would respond to this concern by saying that the empirical parts of the various sciences split off but that the analytic role of philosophy in those sciences remains. The demarcation between the sciences and philosophy may be a pragmatic one, with the more empirical aspects being the domain of science proper and the more conceptual aspects being the province of philosophy.

Even if one accepts this conception of philosophy, there are surely parts of philosophy that do not lend themselves to the function that Maḥmūd envisages, and one might wonder what might become of ethics, aesthetics, and political philosophy, among others. He does not devote a great deal of attention to ethics and aesthetics in this work, but he does provide some indications as to their status and place in this scheme, and his account agrees largely with that of many logical empiricists. In his brief discussions of ethics and aesthetics, Maḥmūd is clear that he thinks that value judgments are relative. Moral and aesthetic terms indicate a certain emotional reaction in the speaker:

> The word "beauty" and related words do not refer to any actual thing in the world of external objects; they refer rather to a psychological state (*ḥāla nafsiyya*) that is sensed by the speaker. There is nothing in the "beautiful" sunset but a cloud tinted with colors that can be specified in terms of the wavelengths of their light; rather the "beauty" in them pertains to the mind of the observer. (*Naḥwa*, 108)

This leads directly to the conclusion that if one observer pronounces a scene to be beautiful and another states that it is not beautiful, there is no contradiction between their statements. That is simply because the two statements do not apply to the same state of affairs. As Maḥmūd puts it, there is no more a contradiction here than in the case in which one speaker says that he feels hungry while another says that he does not (*Naḥwa*, 108). Thus, ethical and aesthetic pronouncements are merely reflections of the subjective state of the observer and are not objective judgments concerning states of affairs in the world. Far from being categorical imperatives or a priori truths revealed by reason, as Kant held, "logical analysis has revealed that judgments that refer to [ethical and aesthetic] values are not part of knowledge at all" (*Naḥwa*, 359).

This "emotivist" position in ethics and aesthetics was widely shared by the logical empiricists, but it was among the least influential aspects of their philosophical outlook. The view was seen by many other philosophers to be untenable in light of the radical relativism and subjectivism that follows from it. Maḥmūd attempts to allay such fears by pointing out that according to the theory of relativity, certain physical quantities that were once thought to be absolute have been shown to be relative, such as space and time. But as he himself acknowledges, space and time are not relative to the psychological states of human subjects (and hence subjective), but relative to a frame of reference. Moreover, even though space and time, when considered separately, are relative to a reference frame, the structure of space-time is not, and hence, certain absolute quantities remain in physics. Indeed, physics would not be possible without such absolute quantities. These two disanalogies between his conception of ethics and aesthetics, on the one hand, and relativistic physics, on the other, render the comparison misleading at best.

Maḥmūd makes it clear that what holds for aesthetic terms and statements also holds for ethical terms and statements, though he dwells more on aesthetic than ethical examples, perhaps because it would have been more provocative to offer an elaborate defense of relativism concerning ethics. He also insists that his relativist stance toward value would not change even if there were unanimity among people when it comes to evaluative judgments, since his position does not arise from perceived ethical disagreement among individuals or groups, but rather as a result of an analysis of the meanings of evaluative terms:

> The conclusion of this discussion is that expressions that refer to aesthetic value or ethical value . . . do not indicate any referent that is external to the human being, who uses them in his utterances to express an emotion that he feels and perhaps intends to evoke in his hearer. (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 113)

If the foundations of ethics are to be found in the emotional states of ethical observers, then there is presumably no room for normative ethics in philosophy. Any attempt to provide ethical principles that would serve to distinguish right from wrong or good from evil is misguided and ought not to be part of the philosophical enterprise. This relativist and subjectivist conception of ethics is of course difficult if not impossible to reconcile with a standard monotheistic religious outlook. Maḥmūd argues that the fact that logical empiricism does not presume to lay down ethical principles means that it does not meddle in religion or normative ethics (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 29). However, he does not address the evident tension between ethical relativism and absolutism, thereby avoiding an overt confrontation with the precepts of traditional monotheism.

30.3. Influence and Legacy

Zakī Najīb Maḥmūd was not without influence in Egypt and the Arab world. He taught innumerable students in Cairo, he wrote regularly in the daily press, several books and doctoral dissertations were written about him, at least two Festschriften were dedicated to him, and a number of prominent Arab intellectuals were concerned to respond to and comment upon his work. Yet his writings did not give rise to a logical empiricist movement in the Arab world, nor did the ideas of logical empiricism spread widely. There are of course numerous factors that might be cited to explain why there is no comparison between his influence among Arabic speakers and, say, Ayer's among Anglophones. But one contributing factor may well be the relative lack of serious engagement in his logical empiricist works with the Arab-Islamic philosophical tradition. Given that he appears intent on conveying contemporary Western philosophical ideas to an Arab audience, there is little attempt to relate these ideas to the philosophical positions and arguments that were prevalent in the Arab-Islamic philosophical tradition.

There are a number of places in this text where it might have been appropriate to anchor the discussion in relevant debates in the history of Arab-Islamic philosophy. For example, the discussion of causation, necessity, and natural law could have provided an opportunity for Maḥmūd to bring in the work of Arab-Islamic philosophers on causation and to relate contemporary views about causation to historical debates on the topic, but he refrains from doing so. One of the classic statements of the necessitarian view of causation that he critiques can be found in Ibn Rushd's account of the causal nexus, particularly in his well-known debate with al-Ghazālī in *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. If it had been related to this debate, the account that Maḥmūd provides of causation might have been more meaningful and relevant to at least those of his Arab readers who would have been familiar with elements of that debate. To be sure, on one occasion, in the course of discussing the importance of quantifying the social world, Maḥmūd mentions al-Kindī and al-Fārābī, stating that their views of the universe were hierarchical and posited different levels or degrees within the social world as within the natural world. He cites this as evidence that they exhibited a tendency toward a quantitative construal of human affairs. However, it is revealing that this questionable interpretation of these two Arab-Islamic philosophers references not the original sources, but the work of the European Orientalist T. J. De Boer (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 322).

Arguably, a more important reason for the relative lack of influence of Maḥmūd's logical empiricist views on Arab society pertains to their marginal relevance to the concerns and preoccupations of that society. In a society in which scientific and technological progress had not yet taken hold, a philosophical movement whose central purpose was so closely associated with the concepts of modern science might well be regarded as somewhat esoteric. At a time when the Arab world was gripped by the problems arising from decolonization and foreign occupation, the absence of democratic governance and representative institutions, and the lack of social justice and disparities of wealth, among other pressing concerns, logical empiricism may have struck many readers as overly theoretical. To be sure, there are passages in Maḥmūd's work on logical empiricism where he discusses its social and political implications, but these are few and far between. He emphasizes the collaborative and nonhierarchical nature of the scientific enterprise in general, and the egalitarian spirit that prevailed among the group of philosophers and scientists constituting the Vienna Circle in particular (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 61, cf. 11). He also claims, more controversially, that denying necessity in the natural world has political and social ramifications, since it leads to a view of the world as dynamic and full of possibility (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 309). But he nevertheless admits that analytic philosophy has by and large turned away from the more practical problems that humanity faces in both private and public life (Maḥmūd, *Naḥwa*, 347–48).

It is perhaps this lack of attention to social and political questions, and with it the threat of irrelevance, that eventually led Maḥmūd away from writing on logical empiricism. His logical empiricist writings had less of an impact than his later writings on Arab culture, which were more widely disseminated and discussed among the wider Arab public. In fact, his positions on culture and modernity were strongly criticized from various directions, by advocates of political Islam and proponents of secular socialism alike. Maḥmūd's views on the state of Arab society and its relationship to both tradition and modernity have not been the focus of this chapter, though they were discussed briefly in section 30.1, and that discussion can serve as a backdrop to some of the criticisms that his work encountered.

Several critiques of Maḥmūd's views on tradition and modernity rightly take issue with his simplistic interpretations of the Arab-Islamic tradition, as well as his (at times) naive embrace of Western liberal democracy. (For trenchant critiques along these lines, see, for example, ʿĀmil 1974 and Sīdā 1990). It may be objected on his behalf that in many of his writings on the Arab-Islamic tradition and modernity, he emphasizes the need to reconcile the former with the latter and to articulate a cultural formula that would bring together elements of the Arab-Islamic heritage with features of modern liberal democracy. But given that his reading of that heritage frequently lacks nuance and that his interpretation of tradition is permeated by a cultural essentialist tendency, it is not a stretch to say that his attitude toward tradition is an instrumentalist one and that he appears to use the idea of tradition mainly to promote the values of the modern liberal West. Since Maḥmūd's early writings clearly enunciate a thoroughly secular outlook as well as a relativist attitude toward ethics, the later invocation of tradition and the adoption of an "Islamic viewpoint" (to use the title of one of his books, *Ruʾya Islāmiyya*) might rightly be regarded as a nominal concession to his cultural milieu. Moreover, in at least some of his essays there is a certain uncritical attitude to Western liberal democracy that overlooks many of its shortcomings. For him, it seems to be something of a coincidence that modern Western civilization also happens to be the civilization of colonialism.

Maḥmūd may not have had many direct disciples and the philosophy of logical empiricism may not have gained many adherents in the Arab world, but his broader ideological framework and his attitude toward Arab-Islamic society have been shared by a significant number of Arab intellectuals over the past several decades. It is fair to say that he represents a liberal tendency among Arab thinkers whose enthusiasm for Western scientific prowess, technological progress, social order, and political stability tends to obscure the West's involvement in colonialist domination, capitalist economic hegemony, unprecedented militarism, and control of global resources. Moreover, the call to embrace Western civilization evinces a certain inattention to the power relations that exist between the Arab world and the West. The fact that many Western ideals, such as liberty and progress, have been used to oppress nonwesterners and justify colonial domination means that they need at the very least to be reformulated and reinterpreted before they can be adapted to Arab societies.

As for the effort to reconcile tradition with modernity, it is an endeavor that is shared by Maḥmūd and many of his critics. Even though it is arguably the problematic that has dominated Arab intellectual life for at least a century, it seems to rest on a questionable presupposition that is rarely brought to the fore. That presupposition is common to many of those who have weighed in on this question, no matter what their position on the proper mix of the traditional and modern. The question as to which elements of the tradition to preserve and which to discard seems misconceived, since it presumes that one is in a position to resolve the matter or to deliberately determine its outcome. It is analogous to the futile effort in some quarters to decide by fiat which linguistic items to retain in the lexicon and which to discard. Like language, cultural production is largely an organic affair, and it would be misguided to try to ordain which aspects of one's cultural heritage to save and which to consign to the dustbin of history. A healthier attitude might be to engage the Arab-Islamic cultural tradition, including the philosophical tradition, in an interpretive process that aims to understand it on its own terms, making it available to be accepted or rejected as the case may be.

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